

Here and There a Leaf

Louise Heywood



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HERE AND THERE A LEAF

BY

Sarah LOUISE HEYWOOD



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CONTENTS

	PAGE
I NO THOUGHT FOR TO-MORROW	1
II BEARING THE CROSS	12
III HE IS COMING	21
IV ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE POOR	28
V THAT IT MIGHT BE FULFILLED	35
VI BE PATIENT NOW	40
VII OUR GIRLS AND BOYS	43
VIII COMMON SENSE IN RELIGION	55
IX OUR RESPONSIBILITY	66
X SETTLE IT WITH JESUS	74
XI FAITH AND WORKS	79
XII NOT BELIEVING BECAUSE NOT UNDERSTANDING	87
XIII NO MIDDLE WAY	91
XIV ARE WE GROWING OLD?	98
XV THE RISEN CHRIST	106
XVI THE PARTING OF THE WAY	111
XVII WORDS OF CHEER FOR THE AGED	115
XVIII FAR FROM HOME	123
XIX THE GOOD FIGHT	127

CONTENTS

	PAGE
XX WOMAN'S HIGH ESTATE . . .	138
XXI TIRED MOTHERS	149
XXII DEAR BABY RALPH	164
XXIII HOME, SWEET HOME	172

I

TAKE NO THOUGHT FOR TO-MORROW

We know not one moment of the future. We may be sitting quietly in our homes, and a flash of lightning, or the sudden development of a hidden disease may send us without warning into eternity. An accident on a railroad train or on an ocean steamer, a misstep, a fire at the dead of night, a hundred calamities which are sending others suddenly to their final home, are as likely to happen to us as to them.

To-day we may have all our loved ones about us, to-morrow they may leave us never to return. To-day we may be rich, to-morrow poor. To-day we may be in the exuberance of health and strength, and to-morrow be laid upon a bed of pain and weakness. To-day we may be strong in the use of all our reasoning faculties, an asylum may be our home to-morrow. Under the care of our Heavenly Father, and in ourselves helpless as regards our future, why take anxious thought concerning it? Whatever we can do to make our lives successful in all things honorable, we are to do. We cannot sit down in idleness and expect God to take care of us without any effort on our part. He has given us our faculties and our

energies, and we are accountable for the manner in which we use his gifts; but we cannot use them independently of him. We must have his approval, and his blessing, and after we have done our utmost, leave the result of our efforts quietly and patiently with him.

There is much happiness for us if we will only take it day by day, as God means we should, and not get so bewildered in the fogs and mists of life as not to see the beautiful sunlight beaming all along our path. Trials and disappointments must come, but the more patient we are, the lighter these will be; and the longer we live the more will they seem like the insect which lights upon us, and which we brush aside, an insignificant and but momentary annoyance.

Life is short. Why then not make the best use of it to-day? When shall we be content? When, if not now, live truly and earnestly, trusting God implicitly, and holding sweet and restful communion with him?

Much that might be sweet and helpful in our lives is overlooked, because we are constantly anticipating some fancied greater blessing than we now possess, and in our anxious care for the morrow, we fail to enjoy the blessings of to-day. In this manner all our days are full of unrest, and we spend our whole life anticipating, but not realizing; for, as soon as we have reached a desired point, we see beyond us still something to reach after, which we believe to be necessary to

our comfort or happiness. The truth is, that if we have not the spirit of contentment to-day, we are not likely to have it to-morrow. If we do not exhaust the resources of to-day, but pass them by unused, we are likely to do the same to-morrow, thus making all our days barren of joy and of the satisfaction which comes from the assurance in our hearts that we have made the most of the day's gifts to us. The feeling of unrest and dissatisfaction which takes possession of so many persons, whatever their circumstances and surroundings, and follows them all through life, is something startling. Now and then we find one who is comparatively at rest, but the majority, even of those who profess to trust God implicitly, are restless and dissatisfied.

What is the reason for this contradictory condition? Many Christians have a sort of indefinite belief that God is their Father, and that he loves them, and will take care of them in a general way. That he has an especial and daily supervision of their lives does not enter their thoughts, even when they pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." With this indistinct idea of God's relation to them, and their relation to him, their faith is weak and wavering, and as no one can be satisfied with anything short of complete faith in a personal Savior, they are not satisfied, neither do they appropriate to themselves the promised daily grace for daily needs. The promises of the Bible are not only for na-

tions, but for the individual. God does not mock us in reaching out his hand to lead us. Neither does he stand ready to give us an occasional lift over difficult places, but hourly is his loving and helping hand extended, and if we would only grasp it and never let go, how many mistakes we might avoid! He is our God to-day. All that we need for to-day comes from his bountiful hand, according to the measure of our faith.

Perfect faith in God would so transform our lives that we would hardly know ourselves. To feel each morning that we are held in the hollow of his hand who controls all the gold and silver, the food and raiment, the good and the evil, to realize that God goes behind us to correct our mistakes, that he is all about us, that nothing can touch us without his permission, and that he permits nothing which is not for our highest good, would bring peace into our hearts and radiance into our faces which could not be mistaken. Every day would bring its own compensations, its own completeness, and we would not need to anticipate or look forward.

How can any one doubt that God means that we should live in this way, taking no anxious thought for the morrow, appreciating and making the most of the blessings of to-day, and enduring its annoyances with sweet submission to his will who knows how much trial we need, who is molding us daily into the image of his Son. How happy are we if we can say sincerely every morn-

ing, "O, Lord, I am thine to-day; use me as thou wilt, and make my will in harmony with thy will, that Jesus may be glorified in me to-day!"

What have we to do with the morrow? The present moment is all that we can, with certainty, call our own. If we do not instantly grasp this moment, and use it, it is ours no longer. It will never come back to us. How wise, therefore, it is to take no thought for the future, in order that we may give our whole thought and effort to the present, that we may take all the good, all the strength, all the power from to-day, and pass it by a well-used day, with no desire to recall it. One day at a time is all that we can master.

It is said that in to-day already walks to-morrow. That is man's perversion. God has separated to-day from to-morrow by the darkness of the night, that we may not be overtaxed. He has made circles of the days and nights, each one complete, and round and full; one half for work and happiness, the other for repose. He holds us in the hollow of his hand from morning until night, and from night until morning, and all we have to take thought about is the work he gives us to do, and the blessings he gives us to enjoy. If we do well each day's work, the future will be provided for. He takes care of that, and our eternal future, he provides for at the beginning. "Seek first the kingdom of God." Then how secure we are. How completely we

can rest in him as we perform our tasks. How full we can fill the moments with love and its outgrowth. How patient we can be under necessary ills. What a warm light we may shed all through our homes, in society, in business circles, everywhere.

It is true that much of the work of the present must have reference to the future. The farmer must prepare the ground and sow the seed; but while sowing the seed, he needs not take upon himself the burden of the harvest. There are a thousand possibilities thrusting themselves in the face of all to give them anxious care for the future. Sow the seed and trust. Do the day's work, whether it be for present need or for the winter of life, in hope.

Our blessed Lord knew what was in man; that he would take upon himself burdens hard to bear, which would imperil his manhood. He knew the race for all time, and that in the determination to lay up treasures on earth, men would become more and more absorbed in the present, or become possessed by the evil spirit of accumulation. He knew the greed, the selfishness, the littleness of men, if left to themselves, and to put a check upon them, and to reveal a better way, he said, "Take no thought for to-morrow."

How thankful we should be that we have only to-day's work to do, its trials to endure. Thankful, too, that we may have all the pleasant things of to-day, all the joys, all the love, the com-

panionship, the tenderness and sympathy at our command, knowing that to-morrow will bring its own good as well as evil.

How many, as if not satisfied with the real troubles of the present, anticipate future trials. How senseless, when the future is as blank to us as possible, and things rarely happen just as we expect. They wear themselves out fretting about the future. They lose to-day's joys in looking for the future greater joy. They throw away good opportunities, in looking for better ones. They withhold from their friends the small roses it is in their power to give, in the hope, some day, of scattering roses everywhere. They withhold the dollar from charity, looking forward to the time when they shall be able to give a hundred instead. They fail to enjoy their small houses and modest, but real comforts, in thinking of future mansions. They make to-day something to be endured and gotten through with in some way, while all the really good things are in the future.

Oh, cast out from your life this haunting phantom of to-morrow. It is unworthy of you to let it follow you so closely, making your life a troubled, perhaps a wretched, anxious existence. There are pearls dropping all around you to-day. Will you trample them under foot while looking for diamonds? There are fragrant lilies and roses blooming for you now. Will you pass them by unheeded, while seeking for rarer flowers which

bloom not oftener than once in a century? Be not so unwise. Live in to-day. Enjoy present good. You will thus find a satisfaction in living, thus be able to make wise use of your powers, thus with your present resources be able to fill the day to completeness. Your life will become tranquil. The sharp and anxious lines will disappear from your face. Your nerves will be stronger, and restfulness will mark all your movements. You will be less avaricious. And you will be brave; for who cannot be brave for to-day? And fearless; who cannot trust God for to-day? And loving; who cannot be magnanimous for one day? And tender; who cannot be tender to the little ones, to the weak ones, to the less favored ones for one day? And pure; who cannot be washed at the fountain in the morning, and remain pure all day?

Oh, glorious life to live, leaving all the unknown future with God, and living one day at a time, doing the work given us cheerfully and well, even though it be of the humblest, and always trusting God. What more do we need than daily bread? If we perform each day our duty to God, to our fellow-men, and to ourselves, what better preparation can we ever make for the long to-morrow of the soul, which in heaven will be as one eternal to-day?

To-morrow is like the rainbow, which, in our childhood, we thought we could reach by running a short distance, but which, to our dismay, we

found to recede as rapidly as we advanced; or like the horizon, which we imagined not far distant, and that we should be able to touch the golden glory gilding it. To-morrow we never see. To-day we hold in a strong grasp. Use it ere it pass away. Time whirls rapidly on. All the to-morrows will be to-days, then yesterdays, and pass quickly far away into the past until centuries hide them from all the living. Time is for us to use. If we waste it while anticipating future good or future ill, we lose to-day, and all the days as they go on, until our last day will find us barren and unlovely.

Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Sufficient also unto the day is the good thereof, if we will open our eyes to see it. How many go through this world as blind as bats, and call it a vale of tears! There is reason for tears, surely; but there is reason, also, for rejoicing. Open your eyes to present opportunities. Think not of what will come to you in the future, but what is yours now. Think not of what you can do in the future, but what you can do now. Think of your present blessings, and appreciate them the more. They are daily bread. Does it rain to-day? Is it dark and gloomy? That is all right; there must be some stormy days. To-morrow the cloud will have a silver lining, or disappear entirely. Does the sun shine to-day? To-morrow may be bright also, or you may pass into eternal brightness.

Are you well? Enjoy your health and use it to the best advantage. Are you ill? Then to-day is a day in which to be patient and endure cheerfully. Are you free from trouble? Then it is a thanksgiving day. Are you carrying heavy burdens for yourself or others? Then it is a day for especial looking to God, and the rolling off your burdens at the foot of the cross. Whatever the day brings to you, God comes with all its gifts in the person of his Son, and in the office of the Holy Spirit. In the presence of Jesus, the darkest day will be made light; by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, all toil and trouble will be sanctified. Using each day well, improving every moment to some good end, how rich we may become as the days go on; and what fruit we may bear to the glory and honor of our Heavenly Father, who fills the measure of our days to completeness so that we need not trespass upon to-morrow.

God wishes us to live on daily bread, with no questioning as to whether to-morrow's food will be more or less palatable than that which we have to-day. To-day's blessings are ours; the rest are God's to give or to withhold, as seems good in his sight. To-day's waiting and loss are ours, and we are to wait patiently, and to lose bravely. To-morrow's trials may be quite unlike those of to-day, and there are some days that are all joy. Who cannot be patient and cheerful for one day? Who cannot rest so firmly on the Rock, our sure

NO THOUGHT FOR TO-MORROW 11

foundation, for one day, as not to be moved, whatever may happen to vex or annoy? It is only one by one, day by day. Give us, Oh, Lord, this day, our daily bread!

II

BEARING THE CROSS

Who can imagine for one moment what our Lord endured for us? The cross he bore on Calvary was not his only cross. No doubt many crosses pressed heavily upon him even from his childhood. He was unlike other children. Their rough and uncultivated ways must have caused his gentle and sensitive nature to shrink within itself. Their inclination for wrong-doing must have given him pain, and his remonstrances and disapproval of their acts were, no doubt, often misunderstood.

One of his life-long trials must have been the constant realization that he was alone. Who could understand him? Who could sympathize with him? Upon whose tender, human heart could he lay his weary head and rest? His position was singular. Never, since the world began, had any one stood in his place, suspended, as it were, between heaven and earth, between ages past and ages to come, neither wholly human, nor yet wholly divine, the Incarnate Son of God, lifted up before the gaze of all humanity, first by symbols, then in his own body, that whosoever believed in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Singular, indeed, was the heavy cross he bore, upon which was laid the sins of all the ages, from the creation of the world to the end of time. No doubt the wooden cross which was placed upon him, and to which he was nailed at the last, was a symbol of all that he had borne and suffered, from the moment when he realized his position and his mission until that time; and his agony in Gethsemane, and his torture upon the cross, were but feeble expressions of what he really suffered for our redemption. It is not strange that in his intense agony he prayed that the cup might pass. None of us can ever know the mystery of that bitter cup. We can only in part divine it, and approach with holy reverence into the presence of the supreme suffering which called forth such a prayer from the Patient One, the Divine One, the Son of God, "Oh, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!" Three times he prayed the same words, as drops of blood were falling on the ground, from his intense agony. But notwithstanding this terrible ordeal, we listen reverently to his expressions of deepest humility, and sweetest submission, "Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done!"

There are hours in the life of every one of us when we feel that our cup is full to overflowing, that it is too bitter, that we cannot drink it. There are crosses fastened to our hearts that pierce and lacerate, and we shrink from them,

and beg and plead to have them removed. But, as with Jesus, there are often reasons why the crosses should remain. God has a work to be done by them which nothing else could do, and they will be lightened or removed only when his purpose is accomplished. There are crosses, also, which are light and so easy to bear that we do not think of asking the help of Jesus in bearing them, and they fret and irritate, and make us impatient and unlovely. There is no cross, be it light or heavy, which he will not illuminate for us, if we bear it in sweetness and humility, following him.

All have crosses to bear. There is no escape for any one. Even when we call ourselves happy, is there not an under-current of pain flowing swift and strong threatening to take us off our feet and bear us out into the sea of trouble stretching on farther than the eye can see, with constant ebb and flow throughout this life? Oh, there is, there is, and God's children will find peace only as their minds and hearts are stayed on him.

Dear one, are you lying on a bed of pain? Is there never a day nor an hour when you are free from suffering? Truly, the earthward side of that cross is very dark; but the other side! Oh, if you can but see the heavenward side! All bright and shining with the loving compassion of your Lord! Hold fast to him, and pain will not overwhelm you; peace will enter your soul, and the Everlasting Arms will hold you, in strong,

loving embrace from morning until night, and from night until morning.

“Take up thy cross and follow me.” We are not to shrink from bearing our cross. We are not to try to run away from it; we are to take it up! “Take up thy cross, not that of some other person. Take up the cross appointed unto thee for thy discipline, for thy instruction, for thy preparation, for the life of the Crucified.” If we be one in him, must we not also be crucified with him? Must not every sinful desire, and thought, every word and deed be nailed to the cross, even to the sacrifice of our most cherished idols, even to the death of our dearest earthly hopes? Humiliated, even with our faces in the dust, here, to receive glory, and honor, and joy unspeakable in heavenly mansions. Crucified with our Lord here, to be exalted with him in heaven!

Joyfully let us take up our cross, and, with bleeding feet, if need be, follow all along the thorny path in which he trod to take us safe to heaven. Sometimes it may seem to us that God is partial, that the crosses of some we know are much lighter than our own. Considering it from a worldly point of view, it does really seem that some persons are set up as targets for sorrow and misfortune.

Many are led as lambs to the slaughter every day, innocent persons led by selfishness, by cruelty, by scandal, by fraud to the ruin of hap-

piness, of reputation, of property, often to death. Why is it? How futile this question which is so often asked in agony, but which can never be answered until the secrets of infinity are revealed, and we see as a grand whole the panorama of the ages pass before us. It was by the sins of the world that the Lamb of God was led to the slaughter, and it is by sin that troubles come to us. Review your life from the beginning. See how much of your trouble has been the result, directly or indirectly, of some wrong-doing on your part or that of another.

Men are like the beasts of the forest. They prey upon one another without mercy. They steal and rob and murder, with the boldness of highwaymen, or under cover of hypocrisy and deceit or with the air of doing a favor. These things have been, and are, and will be to a greater or less extent, no matter who suffers, until Satan is banished and the millennium dawns. If all were living an ordinary, comfortable life, where would be the heroes? Who would perform brave acts, who stand unflinchingly before terrible disaster? Who go to the front in battles to be won? Who follow our Lord to Gethsemane?

After all, you who have suffered, you whom the Lord has chastened because of his great love for you, would you go back if you could to lead an uneventful life, an ordinary, easy life looking only to the comfort of this world? Would you go back to mere commonplace experiences, to the

daily routine of common people, common in the sense of never having had other than common experiences? Would you if you could? To be sure, the pain of your life has been great, and there have been many times when it seemed to you that you could not bear it; but have there not been compensations, have there not been rich experiences? Has there not been a nearer drawing to your Heavenly Father, and a more steady abiding in his sweet peace? Have you not, many a time, felt the sympathetic pressure of your Lord's hand, more precious than lands or houses, silver or gold? Have you not been permitted to lean your weary, aching head upon his bosom, and has he not comforted you? He, the King of kings and Lord of lords?

A heavy cross-bearer, ah, yes! To the shattering of many hopes, to the giving up of much that is dear, to the drinking to the dregs the bitter cup of sorrow and misfortune! Jesus bore the heavy cross, yet he did not complain. Sweetly and patiently, with few smiles and many tears, he went about his Father's business without a murmur; living his wonderful life with the cross ever before him, ministered unto by angels, beloved and approved by God, rejected, cursed and spit upon by man, he went on steadily to the accomplishment of his sublime work, that of saving a lost world!

Doubtless it is for some grand purpose that you are led to the cross; so take comfort, and

trust in God, and love his Son, and be brave and fearless no matter what happens. We do not need to know the reason for God's dealing with us. We cannot question his love, or his wisdom. With all resources in his power, he can do what he wills; and what an omniscient and omnipotent God wills should be accepted as the best for us he has to give. The bread he provides for us often has the appearance of a stone; but it is really of choicest wheat, the very bread of life. He sometimes hedges us about, and shuts us in, and cuts off all egress from the narrow straits in which he holds us, to work his will in us, his holy, blessed will! Then welcome pain and weariness, sorrow and misfortune, even death itself, if it be his will!

To the bearing of the cross let it be, following our Lord with bleeding feet and aching heart even unto death! Really following him, and never forsaking him even though the veil of the temple be rent and darkness cover the face of the earth, waiting in hope at his tomb until the resurrection morn. As he triumphed over death itself, so may we in his name gain victories which the angels will record, and which will call forth triumphant shouts from all the heavenly host.

Then what matter if our lot on earth be hard? After lying on a bed of thorns will not the roses be the sweeter? After the darkness of this life will not the light of heaven almost dazzle us? After living way down in the valley will not the

heights of the New Jerusalem be all-glorious?

"Our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is no abiding." Then let us not place too much value upon earthly comforts, or too much importance upon what happens to us here. If we can be made ready to fill the place God has appointed for us in the building of the Eternal Temple, we need not call the chippings of God's chisel misfortunes. In so far as we are in harmony with God's will, what we now call chastisements will be received as blessings, and, considered in this light, there is no real misfortune, no real chastisement.

Fellow cross-bearers, take courage! The help of the Lord of heaven and earth is yours if you will but take it. You may rejoice under difficulties. You may sing and shout praises to God even when the thunder-peal of misfortune is the loudest, and such praise will rise to heaven as sweetest incense, and mingle with the praises of the heavenly host around the throne of God and the Lamb.

It is not strange that we shrink from bearing the cross if we see only the earthly side of it, upon which is written in blood-red characters, "The reproach of the world," "Separation from friends," "Toil and weariness," "Temptation and sorrow." But if we keep in view the heavenward side, we may take courage, for there we find in letters of gold, "Peace unutterable," "Life everlasting," "A home in the heart of Jesus."

“ ‘Do not choose thy crosses, but take those which God gives thee.

“ ‘In the gift of my cross beware of choosing, for I know better than thou what thou canst endure.

“ ‘Thou must not drag thy cross, but bear it. Thou must not blush because of it, but glory in it.

“ ‘When the burden of thy holy cross terrifies thee, it is the want of love which renders it heavy.

“ ‘Thou must not bear thy cross with ostentation, but simply upon the shoulder.

“ ‘Under the yoke of my cross bend thy will in bearing this burden with humility.’ ”

III

HE IS COMING

“A little girl was playing near the edge of a precipice. Suddenly she felt the earth give way beneath her feet, and before she had time to spring back to a place of safety, she had slipped over the edge of the abyss. With the instinct of despair, she snatched at the grass and tall weeds within her reach. Her little fingers dug deep into the ground, and stayed her downward course. There she hung, suspended in the air. Moments seemed ages until she heard a voice calling in a firm, encouraging tone, ‘I am coming; keep looking up!’ Instinctively she obeyed; she never glanced downward, but clung faster to her only chance of safety. Again the voice, this time nearer, spoke hopefully, ‘I am coming; keep looking up!’ In another moment, two strong hands had seized her in a firm grasp, and she felt herself drawn gently and cautiously forward. Then she was lifted into great, loving arms, and pressed close to her Father’s breast!”

There are supreme moments in life when we must look up and listen for the “I am coming” of our Lord. It may be at the death-bed of a husband or a child that we feel the earth give way beneath our feet, or when we are on the brink of financial ruin and disaster, or when friends

whom we have long trusted prove to be our enemies. All have need to look up to avoid the terrible fall from the brow of the precipice which will surely happen if we look down, if we look away from Jesus, whose voice is calling, "I am coming, keep looking up!"

It is not only when some great and terrible calamity or bereavement threatens us that we should look up. When mothers are weary and discouraged with their many cares and trials, what can they do but look up and tell their troubles to God? He will hear even a whisper, or a wordless prayer for help and comfort, and will come. Fathers who are distracted with business cares and worries, and who know not which way to turn, should look up. Sometimes our greatest trial is the thorn, the pain of which must be borne, day after day, until we are ready to beseech God, with repeated earnestness, that it may be removed. He who wore the crown of thorns and bent beneath the burden of his heavy cross will come to help us bear our trial, be it great or small. To every one, in loneliness, in darkness or in weakness, he will come. Do not fear that his coming will be too late. If he delay it is to try your faith. Only look to him, and he will come; one look away from him, one downward look may be fatal. Listen to his voice, and he will come to save you from every danger, to help you bear every trial, to help you resist every temptation, to wash you whiter than snow that

you may be his own in the Heavenly Kingdom forever and ever!

Why not look up? Why not trust the Omnipotent Father? The flowers lift their faces to him to receive the dew, the sun, and rain. Even the little Alpine flower on the mountain top smiles heavenward. The mountains, whether bathed in the light of the setting sun, or hidden by the clouds, lift their summits toward the sky. Everything in nature looks up to God, and tells us of his love. Even the ocean, lashed to fury in a storm, lifts huge waves towards heaven, and speaks in mighty tones of his power and majesty.

When we see God's great power in the earthquake, the avalanche, the thunderbolt, the fierce flame, and at the same time, his tender care of a blade of grass, or a lily of the field, can we for one moment doubt his desire to lift us up, to hold us safe, to keep the terrible life-storms through which all must pass for discipline, for strength, from hurling us against the rocks, or burying us beneath the waves? Cannot we also look up to him for help in all the trivial things of daily life?

May our faces always turn towards our Lord. May we listen, listen for the coming of his feet. When we hear his voice calling us, may we look away from our earthly cares to him. He is coming with swift feet to lift us up, to hold us safe. We know not over what abyss we are suspended,

ready to fall at any moment, if we look away from him.

Jesus comes not only when we are in danger, but every day with many messages of love and warning. He comes at an hour when we think not, knocking at the door of our homes, knocking at the door of our hearts, and because we are not ready, and do not hear him, or, if we hear, are ashamed to admit him, grieving he turns away to come next time in chastisement, and spares not whatever is needful for our highest good, that not even one of his little ones may perish. How often he might come to us in anger. How often we weary his patience. How we love things which he hates and from which he is trying to redeem us. Could we quietly examine ourselves from the standpoint from which he searches us, each day would bring many humiliating proofs of the need of his coming with chastening hands, with loving pierced hands outstretched to save us.

He comes to us in physical suffering. There are days in the life of each one when every nerve and fiber thrills with pain; when the head throbs as if it would burst, and we find it difficult or utterly impossible to think of anything but our own intense suffering, and we can only hold still and brace ourselves to endure. Need we reproach ourselves if at such times we cannot pray, that we cannot even think of God, that pain holds us in subjection with an iron hand? Ah, then

we can only lie in the arms of Divine Pity, as a sick child lies in its mother's arms, unconscious of the tender, yearning love surrounding and holding us. But as everything which comes from God brings with it some brightness from the throne itself, if in these hours of seclusion we can gain mastery enough over ourselves to realize that this, too, is God-given, we may see ourselves surrounded by a Divine Brightness, even Jesus himself, who cannot remain afar off, when his loved ones suffer; and this wonderful revelation will help us much towards sweetness and patience, and final victory over the pain itself. We need to say continually, "This is of God. I can bear it because it is his will."

Oh, if we could but see, every day, in all conditions of life just how the Savior comes to us! How he wards off unseen dangers, and puts himself beneath us to make for us a sure foundation, knowing far better than we can know, that it is only the things which are built upon the Rock which will endure. That any beauty or any strength built upon a less secure foundation must eventually prove a deformity or weakness. That however high or imposing the battlements of the soul may be, they cannot withstand the shocks, the underminings of the terrible influence of the world, unless they are built upon the Rock Christ Jesus. Sometimes we catch a glimpse of him in the cloud in which he is enveloped, but oftener in our sins and selfishness we do not know that he is

in the disappointment, in the shadow, in the causes for worry and anxiety that so often come to us; and because we worry or repine under his easy yoke, and are restless under his light burden, we lose the blessing of his sustaining and joy-giving presence.

How sadly he comes to us when he finds it necessary to take from us our dearly beloved ones! How he pities us; and takes us in his arms and hushes us as a mother hushes a hurt child! How often he comes to find us sleeping, to be grieved by our indifference! "Could ye not watch with me one hour?"

He comes to us in the still small voice, warning us of the enemy at hand, beseeching us to put on the whole armor of God, the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the sandals of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. He comes in the thunder-peal of misfortune to rescue us from the danger of laying up treasures on earth, for who but he can know the full value of treasures laid up in heaven? He will come at an hour when we think not, to gather in the harvest. Shall we have nothing to offer him then but leaves?

He will come at an hour when we think not to judge the living and the dead. Who will be able to abide that coming? Who but those who appear before him in raiment white and shining, bearing on high a cross stained with his heart's

blood? Who but the blood-bought throng will rejoice at that coming? To those who are redeemed it will be a day of glory and honor, and joy unspeakable. To those who are not redeemed it will be a day of remorse and anguish unutterable. There is no gainsaying this. If any thing be true, this is true. If there be any salvation for us, it is in our Lord Jesus Christ. You who are not washed in the blood of the Lamb, look to yourselves! This night your souls may be required of you!

“Watch ye therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even or at midnight; or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.”

“Be ye, therefore, ready also; for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not.”

IV

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE POOR

There is nothing at which we wonder more than the great contrasts which exist in the arrangement of human affairs in regard to the things of this world. Looking at the existing condition of things without serious contemplation, we are ready to cry out against the injustice of immense wealth on the one hand, and abject poverty on the other; of the honor bestowed upon a few men, to the absolute neglect of hosts of others quite as worthy; of the satiety of comforts and luxuries in one direction, and the meager distribution of the same in the other. But we need consider only for a moment to see what a strange condition of affairs would exist if all were upon an absolute level, or if all were rich, or all were poor. That there should be an ascending and descending scale in the relation of human beings to one another is a necessity in the world's economy. In order that there may be workers in all grades of mental and manual labor, there must be many grades of position, and a necessity for many kinds of work. Without that necessity, the world would stand still. But the contrasts need not be so great. God's arrangement in regard to these things has been perverted. Many men

are poorer than God intended them to be, through their lack of thrift, or their evil habits; and many men are richer than they ought to be, through their unjust gains. These are the things which engender strife, and produce suffering, and induce some to call for a communistic division of property.

If those who find themselves low in the scale of social position are filling a part of God's plan, and fill it honorably, there is no need for suffering poverty. If those who are rich do their duty, no one has reason to cry out against them. Among those who accept their condition in life as an inheritance, and consider it a matter of course that they should be poor, there is great contentment in earning their living and enjoying what, to those more highly favored, would seem meager pleasures. But now and then there is among them one who feels that he is born to better things; one who is not satisfied with his lot, and who tries to struggle into a higher plane. He finds no congeniality in the companionship of his associates. They cannot understand his aspirations for something higher than that with which they are amply satisfied.

This is, indeed, an unhappy condition, if he think only of himself. But may he not believe that his influence is needed by his companions, that they, left to themselves, may not become mere machines? May he not feel that his receiving must be largely through giving; that his grow-

ing must be through much pruning and cutting away of vines to be planted in other gardens?

Does not the branch beaten by the wind and storm grow stronger? Will not he, through his struggle upward, have an advantage over those who are born in luxury, upon whom storms seldom beat, and winds never blow? Ought any one to be discouraged who is ushered into the world with little but his own energy to carry him successfully through life? With good health, this is enough. He is face to face with the world, to fight his own battles, and he must muster all his physical and mental forces to fight those battles well, and gain the victory. By constant exercise he trains and strengthens all his powers for best use. To be dependent on his own resources makes him manly. Work is noble; and you who are born to an inheritance of self-support, rejoice, rather than complain. Put aside all imaginary necessities, and live simply and temperately. If opportunities for mental culture do not readily present themselves, make opportunities, and doubly improve them, so that, in the end, you may excel those whose advantages have been great. That he is poor, is no good reason why any one should be ignorant, unrefined, or unmanly.

We are slow to learn the lesson of true living, simple as it is. God puts us wherever he wishes us to be. There are means within easy reach for our development in just the direction in which he

wishes us to develop. As every little insect or living creature in embryo is placed in the center of that which it will feed upon until it reaches conditions necessary to its removal to a more advanced stage of life, so God places us in the center of those influences which are to feed and mold us for the station he wishes us to fill. Many of us think our fare rather devoid of delicacies, and wonder, often, why things have not been arranged more for our ease and comfort; and, alas, sometimes we refuse to feed on what God provides, and try to satisfy ourselves with husks.

If all would take up their work just where God has placed them, and exhaust the resources of their immediate surroundings, use everything at their command until it is past use, waste nothing of the much God gives to every one whether he be rich or poor, work out from himself into every nook and corner of the limits placed around him, how grandly all would grow! The law of compensation is God's law, and his creatures are not so impartially dealt with, after all, as one might suppose. The trouble comes from opportunities overlooked, or thrust aside.

Many poor people are unhappy because they consider poverty a disgrace. Their pride suffers. They are looked down upon by the rich. Well, what if they are? Does this injure them? Wherein lies the disgrace of poverty? Happiness does not come from the manner in which

others regard us, but from what we ourselves are, and from sources above the power of the human to bestow. One reason why the rich look down upon the poor is because they associate poverty with ignorance and want of refinement. This shows a lack of knowledge of their fellow-creatures; they forget how many leading men come from the ranks of lowly life, while few sons of rich men reach positions of great honor or large influence.

What credit is it to a man to be rich when his wealth is inherited? What honor is it to have a title of nobility, when that title is either bought or inherited, compared with the credit and honor due to those who gain through their own honest and well directed efforts either wealth or a good name?

The Savior of the world gave the greatest encouragement that could be given to the poor, by assuming a lowly condition, that of the peasant and the laborer; the son of a carpenter, himself a carpenter, in his youth, no doubt, helping his father, Joseph, to earn their daily bread, living the simple life of the poor, sharing their joys and sorrows, unnoticed and unknown except to the little circle around him, finding his recreation in the quiet and beautiful scenery near his home, loving nature and all things pure and beautiful. He also asserted the dignity of labor, and placed upon it the seal of his own hand, thus showing sympathy with, and approbation of honest toil

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE POOR 33

throughout all time, and removing from the curse, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground," its sharpest sting.

The Son of God, the Holy One, the Beautiful One, lived thirty years in poverty and toil, and in lowly and sweet submission to his lot, unnoticed and unknown!

Looking on this picture, which is not imaginary, but as real as are the lowly and self-sacrificing lives of thousands to-day, need any one feel that poverty is a disgrace, or that any toil or deprivation is too severe to be endured patiently for his sake?

It is not when the world smiles upon us, and all our earthly path is smooth and joyous that the angels come and go upon the ladder reaching heavenward, bringing us messages of peace from him who sits upon the throne, but when we are alone, fleeing from the world and its allurements, or when we are homeless and forsaken, out under the stars of heaven, the earth our bed, a stone our pillow, and God our only refuge and strength. Nothing can cast us out of his presence. He will take us up quickly when men forsake us, and take us finally to himself to enjoy the true riches which all, however poor they may be here, may inherit in the kingdom of heaven. It is only when poverty is accompanied by vice that it is a curse. Go into the thousands of humble homes scattered all over our land, and see how peace

and contentment reign therein, when, in many instances, the daily toil provides for the day itself, and where the Savior's "Take no thought for the morrow" falls a welcome sound upon their ears; for how can they take thought for the morrow whose resources are sufficient only for to-day? Fear not poverty if you have the love of Jesus in your heart, and his abiding presence in your home. If you love him not, and your ways are evil, though millions of money are at your command, you are indeed poor, and wretched, and miserable; and far less to be envied than the poor man who does not know to-day where he will find his food on the morrow, but whose life is pure, whose feet are upon a sure foundation which will not fail him, though everything else totter and fall, though the earth melt and pass away.

V

THAT IT MIGHT BE FULFILLED

There are many things recorded in sacred and profane history which, at the time of their occurrence, seemed disastrous or unfortunate, which were often the carrying out of the wicked purposes of men, yet which happened and were accomplished that God's plan concerning the world might be fulfilled. All can recall many instances of the kind, and we need only to review our own lives to see that while no chastisement for the present seems joyous, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness; so that whatever happens we need not let our hands fall down, nor our knees become feeble, but looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, run with patience the race set before us, remembering that while God's providences are mysterious, they are but the fulfillment of his plans concerning others or ourselves. God's purposes are grand, and they compass the ages. We catch only glimpses of what he is doing. We are only unshapely masses of unhewn stone tumbled in confusion here and there, and tall cedars and fir-trees spreading their roots and branches on mountain heights, and gold and precious stones

imbedded still in solid rock, or still seething in the furnace. We cannot see, even in imagination, the beautiful building the great Architect will bring forth from that which is now rough and unshapely.

From chaos he wrought our world of beauty, and sun, moon and stars are obedient to his command—"Let there be light!" not withholding for a moment their bright rays, going on steadily in their appointed way until their great glory is hidden by the Greater Glory whose light shall fill all heaven and earth! In the same manner will God bring his spiritual kingdom from its present chaotic state into glory and beauty unfading, and which, though the heavens may fall, will stand throughout eternity.

God has a use for each one of us in carrying out his plan, insignificant and useless as our lives may often seem. Not everything of value is conspicuous or significant. Hidden things are often of as much consequence in the accomplishment of a great purpose as those which are visible. We are very small parts of a very large whole, and all the misfortune and unhappiness which ever came to us is but a grain in the accumulated weight of human woe. If it be necessary that we should be crushed and bruised in order to be ready for the Master's use, ought we not to be willing to be crushed and bruised?

Whatever is needful to prepare us to fill our appointed place in God's great plan, we should

be willing to receive, no matter what chipping away of cherished forms and lineaments there might be. It matters not whether we become beams of cedar, planks of fir, posts of olive tree, costly stones, or pure gold, we cannot have this fitness for use without being hewn, or polished, or refined.

All things are being made ready for the temple which will never be destroyed. Shall we allow ourselves to be thrust aside as useless, because we are not willing to submit to the process of preparation? Because we are not willing that unpleasant things should happen to us that all may be fulfilled according to God's purpose?

Let us be careful not to make ourselves, in our own imagination, the center of God's care, expecting him to grant us especial favor. He has a large family, and all the good things are not given to a chosen few. Sometimes it may be necessary for us to suffer in order that others may be helped in some way by that suffering. We are called upon to be losers, perhaps, that others may be the gainers. The burden and heat of the day must sometimes be ours that others may rest. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of God," is a divine command. Let us hold ourselves ready to be used by the great Master Builder in whatever way he wills. Whether he make of us brazen pillars, or only modest lilies for the adornment of these pillars, is a matter of little moment. That he counts us

worthy of even the humblest service, is a cause for our deepest gratitude. If his will be fulfilled, however it may affect us, it is enough. So instead of fretting and regretting and wondering whether if we had done thus and so things would be different, let us leave the past, present and future with God, and earnestly seek to be willing that his will only be done. Harmony cannot be wrought out of chaos without many severe processes which God only can understand or apply. In whatever degree we are rebellious toward him, to that extent do we hinder the drawing nigh of the time when Christ shall reign triumphant over all evil, and God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

In order that God's will may be fulfilled, many things happen which we cannot understand. When misfortune overwhelms us, let us bear up bravely with the thought that it has something to do with the fulfillment of the divine will. When our friends die, it is that his will may be fulfilled. When sickness is our portion, or when our cherished purposes fail, it is that God's will concerning us in reference to the advancement of his kingdom may be fulfilled. Even our most humiliating mistakes may have a "That it might be fulfilled" connected with them.

Considered in this light, there is no real misfortune; and if we are in harmony with the will of God, what we now call chastisements will be regarded as blessings.

THAT IT MIGHT BE FULFILLED 39

When the day comes for that grand and silent building of the Eternal Temple, when neither hammer nor ax, nor any tool of iron may be heard, shall we be left out because we are not willing to be made ready in God's own way?

" 'Tis the Master who holds the mallet,
And day by day
He is chipping whatever environs
The form away.

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With tools of thy choosing, Master,
I pray thee then,
Strike just as thou wilt; as often
And where and when
The vehement stroke is needed,
I will not mind,
If only the chipping chisel
Shall leave behind
Such marks of thy wondrous working,
And loving skill,
Clear carven on aspect, stature,
And face, as will
(When discipline's ends are over),
Have all sufficed
To mold me into the likeness
And form of Christ."

VI

BE PATIENT NOW

“Oh, give me patience, Christ, for this day’s need;
And lest I halt or falter by the way,
Do thou with tender, loving, piercèd hand,
Beside me walk, and lead me all the day.”

What need we mothers have to pray this prayer!
For life is like a tangled skein; and if
We in our haste and want of patience catch
And pull, and tie each knot more tightly still,
Or break the threads, why, then our life is full
Of knots and broken threads; but, if our tasks
Be done with sweetness and with patience, then
From knots and tangles freed, the life is smooth
And ready to be used for others’ needs,
As well as for our own.

So when our cares
Press heavily, and brain and heart are weak,
And longing for a little rest and peace,
We speak in tones too harsh for mother’s lips,
“Be quiet, boys!” and gentle eyes seek ours,
As if to wonder why mamma is cross
To-day, and why she meddles with their play
So needlessly—does it not often seem
To us that if we kept in mind this prayer
And said it o’er and o’er, we should be less
Annoyed at children’s noise, and other things
Too trivial to name?

It is not right
To hush too much the noise of children's play,
Or put too much restraint upon their acts.
They need to have their freedom, like the birds
And flowers, to sing their own sweet songs, and grow
Their own sweet way. Too much restraint defeats
Our purposes. And so we need to have
Of patience, largest store; and need to watch
And pray, and hide in Christ, and lose ourselves
In him, that he may speak through us in tones
Of gentlest love, that his sweet patience may
Be ours; and thus our mother-love so strong
And deep, be strong and deep in every word
And act of daily life; for love should reign
In homes as well as hearts; for of what use
Is love which feels, but never acts? What use
Is love which hides itself, and blesses her
Alone who loves, and not the one beloved?
What use is any sweetness in our hearts
If that same sweetness does not breathe through all
Our words and works?

If only when our boy
Lies deep beneath the snow, or when the sun
With loving tenderness sends warmest rays
To kiss the little violet-covered mound
Where buried lie our dearest earthly hopes,
We say, "Oh, if I had my baby back
Once more, if I could hold him in my arms
And feel his soft, warm cheek against my own,
And hold his tiny hand and hear him lisp
The sweet, sweet words I used to hear him say,
And feel his little arms around my neck,
I'd be as patient as the day is long!"
If only then, what vain regrets are ours!

Oh, if we have sweet flowers for our boys,
Or for our girls, then let us give them now!
For tender cherishing, and patient words,
And crowns of flowers, rosebuds in the hand,
Or in the casket wreathes of lilies white,
Or violets sweet, are given too late to bring
Joy to their hearts, or ours.

Be patient now!

Be tender, loving, now! Give all the wealth
Of mother-love in such a way that it
Will fill their lives with joy; and not reserve
It for their burial; as many things
Too good for common use are laid away
On shelves, or kept in darkened rooms which, oft,
Past natural use, cause vain regrets alone.
Give royally your gifts; and scatter flowers
Beneath the feet you love so well; and crown
With loving tenderness the little ones
Who soon may in God's garden pluck sweet flowers,
And sing the heavenly songs, and wear gold crowns!

VII

OUR GIRLS AND BOYS

What greater or better gift can we offer to the Republic than to teach and instruct our youth?—Cicero.

It is of the coming generations of citizens that we speak when we say "our girls and boys," of little men and women for whom we are responsible, not only while they are children, but, largely, after they reach manhood and womanhood; for "as the twig is bent, the tree is inclined." The natural caretaker and educator of the child is the mother, who should take all possible pains to educate herself for this holy trust, this great responsibility which begins with the first breath of the infant, and ends only with life. From the first dawn of intelligence, the child should be taught obedience, truthfulness, and self-control; long words to apply to the education of an infant, but a wise mother who is worthy to hold in her possession an immortal being, knows just how to so simplify these principles of true living that the youngest child may understand the spirit of them.

The first thing to be taught our girls and boys is unquestioning obedience to our commands. Home government is not difficult, if wisely and

consistently administered; but, alas! how often it is unwise, capricious, defeating its own ends, bringing trouble to both child and parent; sometimes broken lives, broken hearts, crimes, even, resulting from the fault of the parents in their manner of rearing their children. Law is a necessity in every phase of life; but law without its careful and just enforcement, is void. The child must always be under law; first at home, then at school, then in society and in relation to the State and Nation, and always under the law of God. The sooner the child can be made to understand this, by careful and gentle teaching, appealing to his reason, the better. Obedience is the foundation of good citizenship, and of true religion. The child should be taught that the parent, also, must be obedient to higher powers; then he will not be so impatient of restraint, and he will not constantly look forward with delightful anticipation to the time when he is of age, and can have his own way. When I was a child, I thought it would be one of the happiest days of my life when I grew up and could have all the honey I wanted from a certain blue sugar-bowl, where it was kept for medicinal purposes. But when I did grow up, I no longer wanted the honey, and having my own way was still unattainable!

Self-assertion and a consciousness of certain rights and prerogatives belonging to them are inherent in all children in a greater or less degree. It is the man and the woman struggling within

them before they have the wisdom to discriminate between the right and the wrong time in which to assert themselves. "I have a right to do it mamma," said a boy of eight years in reply to her wish that he should not do a certain thing.

A father punished his little boy for going on the ice repeatedly, when he had been forbidden to do so, by ducking him. Four times he ducked him in the ice-cold water, and each time the boy said, with his teeth chattering, "Do it again, papa! Do it again!"

A boy was in the habit of teasing for pickles, pepper, mustard, etc., at the table. One day his mother thought she would cure him of wishing for these forbidden things. She put a large quantity of mustard on a piece of meat and gave it to him. He put it in his mouth, chewed it vigorously, choking, and with tears in his eyes; but he persevered, and swallowed it, and then called out, "Dood, mamma! Dood!" Another boy of two and a half years was very mischievous, and one of his tricks was to throw whatever he could find, stove-handle, or glass bottle or other dangerous thing out of the open window so quickly that it was impossible to prevent him. Then he would stand in front of his mamma, back to her, and say, "Pank, mamma, pank!" Sometimes he would scold himself when he had done wrong. "Naughty Ralphie! Naughty, naughty Ralphie!" And you wonder how any mother could help smiling and catching him to her heart with a hug and

a kiss, instead of administering the reproof the little fellow deserved. Mothers need not worry too much over the persistent disobedience of such boys; they have in them the grit of mighty men of valor.

When we who are now in the prime of life, or older, were children, we revered our parents, and thought it a dreadful thing to disobey them. In many families the old order of things is reversed, and parents, in many instances, obey their children. Mothers are often heard to say, apparently without shame or regret, "I can do nothing with this child. She does not pretend to obey me." This is usually said in the presence of the child. Wherever there are children, "I will" and "I won't," "I shall" and "I shan't," are often heard, with feeble protest if any at all on the part of the parent. Their naughty words and deeds are looked upon as cunning, and the parents laugh instead of reproving, and before they realize their mistake, their boys and girls are beyond control, naughty, self-willed and selfish.

While it is wrong to nag a child continually, and while many of their tricks, which they soon forget, should receive little notice, the difference between right and wrong should be always kept before them. This can be taught more effectually by story or song than in any other way. Much can be accomplished with a naughty or grieved child by diverting his attention. A

gentleman noticed two little boys on their way to school. The smaller one fell, and though he was not much hurt, he began to whine in a baby way. The older boy took his hand in a kind, fatherly way, and said, "Oh, never mind, Jimmie, don't whine; it is a great deal better to whistle." And he began in the merriest way, a cheerful boy whistle. Jimmie tried to follow his example. "I can't whistle as nice as you can, Charlie, my mouth won't pucker up good."

"Oh, that is because you have not got all the whine out yet," said Charlie; "but try a minute, and the whistle will soon drive all the whine away." So he did, and the last the gentleman saw of the little fellows they were whistling away as if that were the chief object of their lives. This teaches a lesson we should all do well to heed. A story, a whistle, or a song will often divert the attention of the child, and cure many a pain, and grief, and naughty mood. Badness in the heart will always retreat from the presence of that which is pleasant, and good, and lovely.

Many persons seem to think that any one of ordinary intelligence can properly have the care and instruction of a young child. The best educators think otherwise. "No unskilled hand should play upon a harp where the tones are left forever in the strings!" If you wished to build a house, would you employ careless or ignorant workmen to lay the foundation? Of how much greater importance is the foundation

of your child's character! If you had a field in which you wished to raise the best grain, you would take great care to have the ground properly prepared. You would procure the best seed in the market, and have it sown in the right manner, and carefully tended, that no weeds might spring up to choke the grain. You would take a personal interest in the matter, and not leave it entirely to hirelings.

The mind of your child is a most receptive field into which some sort of seed will surely fall, to spring up and grow and ripen for the harvest. Will you neglect the sowing and leave to chance the welfare of your own offspring? Amiel says, "In the moral world there is no ground without a master, and waste lands belong to the Evil One." See that there are no "waste lands" in the hearts and minds of your children, and that the good land is well cultivated; then you may be sure of an abundant harvest of all things good, and pure, and noble in the lives of your girls and boys, of your men and women!

Cicero says, "There is no place more delightful than one's own fireside." There is, truly, no place more delightful when love and good sense reign in the home, when the father and mother are one in the management of the children, when all talk or discussion about them in their presence is avoided, and when even the youngest has some share in the responsibility of making a happy home.

If possible, children should be brought up in a home, and not in a boarding-house or hotel, for many reasons. However humble it may be, let there be a home around which interests and affections may center, and from which the young people may go out into the world with the parental blessing and the hallowed influences of home life.

"Where do you live?" asked a kindly old gentleman of a little girl.

"We don't live," she replied in unconscious sarcasm, "we board."

A love of home should be cultivated while the children are young. Give your girls the highest education they desire, but do not fail to train them to be good wives and mothers, and good home-makers. Choose companions for your girls and boys, that there may be no opportunity for haphazard acquaintances. We should make ourselves one with our children and young people, and join in their sports and recreations. We should see that they have all that healthful nature craves in the way of amusements at home, or at the home of friends of whom we approve.

When sons and daughters are trained for usefulness, there will be fewer unhappy marriages, and divorces will be less frequent. When a mother works hard that her daughter may have white hands and polished nails, be sure that she is preparing her for disappointment and unhappiness. The result of such rearing to both

mother and daughter is inestimable. It is not at all certain that she will marry a man who will be able to keep her in idleness, and even men of wealth prefer women for wives rather than dolls. No girl's education is complete without a practical knowledge of everything pertaining to the home. Every girl and boy should be taught how to earn a living at need. There is no room in this world of work and great responsibilities for idle young women and helpless young men.

Habits that are formed in youth are likely to continue through life. If girls and boys are led in right ways, it will become second nature to use proper language, to be studious and diligent, neat and orderly, respectful and obedient, thoughtful of the feelings of others, and helpful everywhere. Let us turn their feet into right paths, which, the older they grow, will be more and more to them the paths of righteousness and peace.

There is no book in which the children are more interested than the Bible, the daily reading of which is so important.

"Read more! Mamma, read more!" was the common request of a boy of three years, when his mother had finished her daily reading of the Bible in words which he could understand. Song is of great use in the education of a child. Dr. Talmage said: "Christ ought to be the cradle song. What our mothers sang to us when they put us to sleep, is singing yet."

Nathaniel Hawthorne had a little daughter

who was fond of making up stories to amuse her youngest brother. One day she was overheard telling him of a boy who was so naughty that he grew naughtier and naughtier, and every day grew naughtier still, until at last, at last, he struck God! Teach the boys and girls that every wrong act, every unkind or untrue word of theirs strikes God! That they cannot do a wicked thing that hurts some one else, without hurting God.

Let there be the closest possible intimacy between parents and children. Enter into the lives of your children heartily. Give them the information they will surely seek. Anticipate their natural curiosity on certain subjects by discreet revelations from time to time. Teach them modesty and purity, and how to avoid evil companions. Try to see things from their standpoint. The more you do this, the more will they learn to look at things from your own standpoint of greater knowledge and experience. Hold their confidence as a priceless treasure. Let nothing separate you from their loving trustfulness. Let nothing mar the beauty of the closest intimacy.

When boys and girls have an especial bent in any direction, it ought to be encouraged. Nature is the best guide to a successful career in life. When young men and young women mistake their calling, it is often through following the advice or obeying the commands of an unwise father. The power-loom was the invention of a boy who made a model with his pocket-knife. He showed the

model to his father, who immediately kicked it to pieces, saying that he would have no boy about him who would spend his time with such foolishness. He sent the boy to a blacksmith to learn a trade. The boy made another model, and showed it to his master, who saw that he had no common boy as apprentice, and that the invention was valuable. He had a loom constructed under the supervision of the boy. It worked to their perfect satisfaction, and the blacksmith furnished the money to manufacture the looms, while the boy received half the profits. Imagine the surprise of the father when he learned that his son had become a famous inventor.

Mrs. Browning said that souls were dangerous things to carry straight through all the spilt saltpetre of the world. We all know how true that is. Trials and temptations are on every hand. Wickedness, often too vile to name, flaunts itself before our children and young people. In order to avoid these things, they must be well grounded in knowledge and character. They must know what they have to meet, and how to meet it. It is unpardonable to keep them too long in ignorance of themselves, or of their surroundings. Upon fathers, mothers, instructors, the responsibility rests heavily. They should all teach by example as well as by precept. A boy of thirteen sat at table with his father. There was wine on the table. The waiter asked the boy what he would take. "I'll take what father takes," was his re-

ply. The father had his hand on the decanter just ready to pour out the wine, and he dropped it as if it were fire. Laying his hand lovingly on the head of the boy, he said, "Waiter, I'll take water."

Sometimes parents teach their children by their own example to deceive and tell falsehoods, and then punish them for deception and untruthfulness. When asked his age by a railroad conductor, a boy said, "At home, I'm twelve; but when we are in the cars, my mother says I'm only ten." Profane fathers must expect to have profane sons. A boy who was heard to swear was told that he must ask God to forgive him. His mother followed him to his room to see that he obeyed her. He knelt down and said in a surly tone, "O God, I'm sorry I said a bad word; but I want you to hurry and grow me up quick so as I can swear like father does, and then you wouldn't mind it."

When we are walking out on a frosty morning in Autumn, we often see the perfect form of the leaves left upon the sidewalk where they have lain all night, or perhaps for an hour or two. Just as perfect is the impression of our lives upon the minds and hearts of our children. Therefore we need to watch and pray and use great care lest we mar the beauty of the wonderful beings God has committed to our keeping.

The Rev. Basil Wilberforce, canon of Westminster, writes: "My bird knows a sweet little Ger-

man song, 'Ich liebe dich' (I love you), but I can get him to sing it only by standing before his cage, whistling the tune myself, smiling upon him and making myself as much at home with him as possible." In this manner we may lead our children to follow our example by singing sweet songs ourselves, if we would have their hearts attuned to perfect melody.

VIII

COMMON SENSE IN RELIGION

How much contentment and true happiness is missed by the lack of common sense in every day living. It is a rare thing to find a person who is earnest and sensible, and who does not feel compelled to do as others do, who has the moral courage to depart from the rules and conventionalisms of "society," and to face boldly and with true dignity the false judgments and ridicule of those who believe him to be ignorant of the same, because he does not conform to them strictly enough to meet their approbation.

What people say, and what people think are often more weighty considerations than his own interests, absurd as this may seem when we reflect upon it. It is important, in his own estimation, that life should be a grand performance. The world must be pleased, otherwise life cannot be a success. To this end there is a constant struggle to keep up appearances, to so conduct himself that he may seem to have more money than he really has, that he is better born than he really is, and, in general, to shine with a false light. The effort to keep this light burning requires the sacrifice of many comforts, robs him of content and rest, and is a servitude which he assumes to please

others, when, in all probability, he does not please them, after all his efforts.

Many live beyond their means, hoping for something unusual to occur in time to save them from disaster. Others live up to their means so closely that when there is an unexpected demand upon them, they are in trouble. To what end is this hazardous way of living? For comfort? It cannot give comfort. It can only bring care and anxiety, and the miserable satisfaction of knowing that what the world looks upon is fair, with nothing to excite the suspicion that poverty or even limited circumstances may be lurking about; and to this poor end, personal good sense, comfort and happiness are sacrificed.

When Jesus tells us that we need take no thought for the morrow, he takes it for granted that we are using wisely and prudently the things of to-day, and not wasting money in extravagance or useless display to convince our neighbors that we are persons of importance. He would not do that. When on the earth he sought not to win the praise of the world by display. How simply and plainly he lived! Cannot we all learn from him a lesson essential to the highest good of multitudes of people, indeed, to every one, whether in the church or in the world?

A little boy was teasing his papa to buy him something, and his papa replied, "You want too many things." "Buy me too many things!" was the answer. Grown up children want too many

things. Never satisfied with what they have, they clamor for more, and more. They look no farther than this life, and so overrate the value of some things, and underrate the value of others. If money increases their needs increase in proportion, so that they are really no better off with hundreds of thousands than they were with thousands. Instead of using their newly acquired wealth for purposes productive of real benefit, they pull down houses already comfortable, and large enough for their necessities, in order to build larger ones; then more servants must be employed; in every direction expenses must be increased, in order that the appointments of their homes may be in accordance with prevailing customs among those whose favor they would gain.

Why not meet the real condition of things wisely and bravely? Why court the favor of those whose opinion of you is based upon external matters? Why not give up the foolish and ineffectual struggle with pride? What matter is it whether you are thought to be rich or poor, in high or in middle station? Of what consequence is it that the rich should be your friends, if you are not rich? They have the whole world from which to choose their favorites. It is natural that they should choose them from their own station. It is as if the violet should wish to be a rose, or the rose a sunflower, for us to wish to emulate those who, in the opinion of the world, are above us. As the flowers have their own form,

and color, and fragrance, each beautiful and joy-giving, so have we, each one, a place and mission; so have we our own capacity for growth and usefulness.

To God, there is no above nor below, except as regards character, and spiritual growth. To attain to the highest excellence in your sphere of action, to be all that God meant you to be when he created you, to use all the resources at your command for growth, and bloom, and fruit as do all growing things in nature, will leave you no time and no inclination to cultivate useless friendships, or to carry needless burdens. You need not envy those above you, nor scorn those beneath you.

Let us strive to make the best possible use of our advantages, without undue reference to the opinions of our fellow-men. No human judgment is unbiased. We can rely only upon the judgment of our Lord. Could we form the habit of seeing things from his standpoint, how soon would all useless strivings cease, and our lives become simple and grand like his life! We need no leader but him. We need bear no yoke but that imposed upon us by him. The yoke imposed upon us by the world is indeed heavy, and its burdens too great to bear; but his yoke is easy, and his burden light.

Cast out, then, from your life the things which wear, which worry, burdens which you ought not to bear lest they paralyze your best energies;

seem to be what you are, and not an ugly creature with a false face. Be not like the poor tortoise who borrowed the eagle's wings. Martial says that there is nothing more contemptible than a bald man who pretends to have hair! And so are we contemptible if we pretend to be what we are not.

More of the simplicity and common sense of the religion of Jesus ought to be practiced in our homes, in society, and in the church. Think for one moment how much courage it requires for a woman associating with those who dress fashionably, to wear contentedly last year's bonnet, or a dress two or three years old. What condition of things is that in which an acquaintance is valued in accordance with the style of her clothing? What opinion can a woman have of herself for judging the worth of another by her dress? If she should choose to wear the fashions of twenty years ago, what matter? All fashions return in time. The old become the new, and the new the old. What difference? There should be equal rights in these things, that the weight of custom may not press too heavily, and that the freedom of Christianity may enter into our style of dress, and that the consistency and common sense of true religion may be shown in what we wear and how we wear it. First of all we should dress within our means, wear what is modest and becoming and not in the extreme of fashion. Clothing has its proper use, and is not for mere

display, or to excite the envy of those about us. We dress in the best taste when our dress does not attract attention, and when once put on properly, we need not think of it again until we take it off. It is not necessary to dress meanly. Our clothing may be of expensive material, and yet be modest, and in every way suitable. Indeed, it is of the greatest economy to buy the best of the kind required, if it be desirable or necessary to make the garment last a long time.

The years that are going by cannot be recalled, and we are growing old more rapidly than we realize. If we are to accomplish anything worth accomplishing, if we have not already begun, it is time to begin now. The exercise of common sense and good judgment in our every day matters will leave us more time to devote to especial and important objects outside our merely personal interests. It is not to be expected that those who have no interest in the Christian religion will spend much time or thought upon serious things, but not so of Christians. We are not our own. We have given our all to Jesus. He it is whom we must consult in regard to the use we make of everything.

In seeking not to dress too much, let us avoid the other extreme, and not be so indifferent to our personal appearance as to dress shabbily. It would not be pleasing or honoring Jesus for those whom he loves to neglect the body. It is the home of the soul, and it should possess a quiet charm

attractive to our friends and to all good people. There is another thing in which our influence is stronger than in that of dress, wherein we fail to use good sense, and to show ourselves consistent Christians. It is in our conversation. Who can listen to the conversation of a dozen women whom one incidentally meets at a public gathering, or at a popular resort, without often feeling disquieted or ashamed? It hardly seems possible that intelligent beings, lovely in the image of their maker, endowed with reason, gifted often with the power of rising to an unlimited height, capable of reaching after, and in a measure, grasping the infinite, should be satisfied to talk of little besides dress, and fashion, and gossip, should be apparently satisfied with such subjects.

When the themes for profitable conversation are so varied and so ample, when the mind expands so rapidly under the influence of the interchange of thought and sentiment, when thought and sentiment are worthy of expression, what a pity that any one should be satisfied with nonsense. And when to all the other graces of womanhood are added the crowning graces of religion, how surprising and humiliating all this is!

We might fail to recognize a Christian woman in such companionship; but, strange to say, there are many professing Christians who demean themselves in just this kind of foolish, uninteresting conversation by the hour, and think nothing of it. What power can rouse the thousands of

women who thus waste the time, the talents, the energy God has given them, to a true sense of their privileges and obligations? What a revolution must take place in society and in the church before the simplicity and nobleness of Christ-like lives will be realized among women; before the light of wisdom and truth will shine forth steadily from their lives to illumine the world in which they move. It is plain that women do not understand their power or their importance in the world, or so many of them would not lead the life of butterflies.

Without doubt there are many who would break away from the yoke imposed upon them by the acquisition of wealth and position, and the tyranny of custom, if they had the courage to do it. Without doubt, many long for better things; but who will break away? Who will lead the multitude of burdened ones into a better life, and to an inestimable increase of happiness?

Ah, how many Christians are drawn into the current to float with the rest, resisting feebly, or not at all, the tide which is bearing them farther and farther from the center of all good, and bringing dishonor upon Jesus Christ whom they profess to honor.

No one should be compelled to do as others do merely because others do it. There never was a greater curse than that of the desire to ape other people. We are individuals. We have individuality. Let that individuality be preserved in all

the relations of life. One has poverty, another has wealth. Let the poor man live according to his poverty, and the rich man according to his wealth, neither of them envying or sneering at the other. One has rare ability, another has mediocre talent. Let the first use his ability for the best and purest purposes, and the other do the best he can, and let each be content with the other. One woman is fond of dress and willing to spend half her time in adorning her person. Another finds these things a burden from which she wishes to be freed. Let the former waste her time thus if she wish; what is that to the other? And let the latter live in freedom, and dress as is convenient. Whose affair is it but her own? Let there be perfect independence. Let each one be a unit of unique value, capable of standing quite alone.

True living does not consist in the position we hold in the world, or in the church, neither in the amount of worldly comfort and pleasure with which we are able to surround ourselves; still less in the good or bad opinion of our fellow-men. That is the most noble life which gives little thought as to whether one is known or unknown, but which moves on sweetly and quietly in its appointed sphere, gathering each day the flowers within reach, and patiently extracting the thorns which are hidden in the sweetest flowers, valuing the highest those things which Jesus values the highest, and shedding around the luster of a Christ-like character.

One obstacle to perfect harmony between man and man, is pride of family. It is a good thing to be able to look back upon a long line of noble ancestry; but the man whose ancestors were plebeians, and who wins for himself nobleness, is superior to the man whose nobility is an inheritance. It is not what our fathers were, but what we are that should claim for us the highest regard. It is character only that bears all tests through all time; that shines bright and pure in the clear light of the supreme moments in life when we are called to noblest deeds or bravest endurance. When that hour comes in which we must stand before God in the clear light of heaven, what will then stand but greatness of soul?

The King of heaven chose his earthly lot among the most lowly, and esteemed those noble who were noble in character. He taught his disciples not to seek high places, to seek no worldly honor or fame; that the greatest victories they could achieve would be to conquer their own spirits, and that those who followed in the meek and lowly path he trod would be exalted to his throne in heaven.

God made all men equal as regards individual rights and privileges; equal in the contest for knowledge, goodness, and truth. He places low in the scale of humanity those who deserve to be low, and those who merit a high position, are, in his esteem, already high, without regard to wealth, or family, or blood. His scale of

measurement is ours reversed: "The first shall be last, and the last shall be first." When we see men and things from his standpoint, as nearly as we may, then will the galling chains drop off, and we shall be free to live in accordance with sanctified common sense. Then shall we belong to God's nobility, a privilege which is conferred upon many who are scorned by the nobility of this world.

There are large beams in the eyes of the world. It does not see clearly. Then let us not place too much value upon its judgments; rather let us walk quietly with God, ruling our lives by that of his beloved Son in whom there was no guile.

IX

OUR RESPONSIBILITY

Whether we realize it or not, whether the fact is acceptable to us or not, or however strong our effort may be to throw it off, our responsibility to God, to man, to ourselves, remains. We cannot shut ourselves within ourselves if we try. We cannot build around ourselves a wall of separation from other people, so that it would be the same to them as if we were not in existence. It can never be the same to them. Human beings touch each other in some way. It is a law of nature which cannot be revoked. Humanity is a common brotherhood.

There are lines drawn sufficiently marked, it would seem, to separate completely, different classes of society; but they cannot be so separated. The rich influence the poor, and the poor the rich. The good influence the bad, and the bad the good. All classes are bound together, because all are human beings; all have souls; by all must be waged the battle of life; all have their joys and sorrows, their conflicts and their victories, and to all must come, finally, the common lot of death, and the probability of being forgotten before many generations shall have succeeded

theirs; and upon all rests the burden of responsibility.

Jesus calls our influence the light we shed around us. Is it a true or false light? Will it warn others from evil ways, or lead them into these ways? Is it wavering or uncertain and deceiving like the will-o'-the-wisp or steady and bright, leading always toward truth and the beauty of holiness? Jesus said, "Let your light so shine that men may take knowledge of your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Especially in our homes should our light shine clear and steady. If our influence there be cheering, strong and helpful, if our responsibility there be fulfilled carefully and prayerfully as in the presence of our God, then will there be shining from us a light which will never grow dim, and an influence which will be felt almost without limit.

It is in little ways that we are most tempted to hide our light. Physical ailments are often the cause, but not a good excuse for a surly "good morning," or a hasty word which will sting through all the day. It is not the burning, scorching, concentrated heat of the sun that is most acceptable, but the diffused rays which reach into all the dark corners, and bring light and warmth everywhere. It is not the brilliant flashes of light that we shed around us that render our lives and the lives of others more lovely and lovable, but the diffused light of little words and

deeds. Neither is the severe storm so lasting in its influence as the continued dropping which wears away stone. We can endure an occasional outburst of anger more patiently than the petty fretting and fault-finding which is of daily occurrence in many homes.

Sunshine then, sunshine everywhere! Have control of your tongue and of your manner. Keep back the hasty word. If things do not suit you, do not find fault. This never induced any one to comply cheerfully with your wishes, and never will. Approach one another with love and tenderness when any difficulty is to be discussed, or mistake corrected. It is easy to avoid petty bickerings and strife in a home where all its members are watchful over themselves; and watchfulness is absolutely necessary. Words slip out so easily. The tone of the voice partakes so much of the feeling, and we are creatures of impulse. We have need often to say to ourselves, "Wait a moment. What am I going to say?" "What am I going to do?" Thinking before speaking or acting would often save bitter and sometimes life-long regrets.

We cannot think or speak, we cannot laugh or weep, or keep silent, stretch forth our hands or withhold them, give or receive, without influencing some one; and whatever that influence is, we are. The water that flows from the fountain partakes of the precise nature of the fountain. If we speak gently, and our manner is always gentle, then are

we gentle. If our influence upon others be a Christian influence, then are we Christ-like. If our influence be worldly, then, no matter what we may call ourselves, we are worldly. Our every act is of the utmost consequence to ourselves and to our race, for our influence does not stop with those with whom we come into immediate contact, but it circles on to the outermost edge of time. Our words and deeds weigh more heavily in the scale of human weal or woe than we are apt to think. Every hour we are weaving a web which will entangle souls in deeper misery, or we are drawing by the fine and beautiful threads of our lives, souls nearer to truth, to beauty and goodness, nearer to heaven.

There may be those who will say, "Why make life so serious and gloomy?" We are not dolls or puppets. That our acts are of consequence, gives beauty and dignity to our lives; and the same God who created us with the capacity to influence others, will strengthen us to bear the responsibility resting upon us, and to meet our weighty obligation to do good and not evil.

God's way is a way of light. The gloomy path has once been trod by him who carried from his cradle to his grave the burden of our sins. He trod this path to open for us a smoother, brighter path. He bore the crushing burden that we might have no burdens. His life went out in darkness that ours might go out in light. He bore the cross that we might wear the crown.

By perfect obedience to the commands of Jesus, a constant taking up of the cross, and a close following in his footsteps we may fulfill our obligations to God, to our fellow-men and to ourselves. The Son of God will not lead us into error. His commandments are not grievous, nor the cross of his appointing too heavy. In his parable of the talents we are taught that we did not come into the world like dumb animals, with no means of progress, no responsibility. Upon each one God has bestowed certain gifts; not upon all alike, for we must do the work of the world, and some are fitted for one thing, and some another, so that all kinds of work may be accomplished.

An acorn, containing the germ of an oak, falls from a tree and is buried in the earth. If it refuse to take the food nature has provided for it, to swell and burst, to put forth rootlets and to push a tiny stem up through the soil, or, even after it has done this, if it will not drink in the air, the dew, and the sunshine, if its roots do not take up sustenance from the earth, and grow stronger and stronger, it will never become a tree; even the little life it has will be taken away, naturally, and it will perish altogether.

We enter this world knowing only how to cry and to take the food nature has provided for us; but there is a power within us to grow physically, mentally and spiritually, and we are surrounded by conditions which tend to rapid growth and de-

velopment. If we neglect to appropriate to ourselves all God has provided for us, if we fold our hands idly because but one talent has been given us, what can we expect but to lose, naturally, this one talent, and to be cast out as unprofitable servants? Around him who uses to the utmost his God-given ability, the circle of opportunity and privilege will widen more and more, reaching to the utmost bounds of human knowledge and acquirement, and human influence, reaching even into eternity. For who will dare fix a limit to the development of an immortal being created in the image of God?

All the acts of life are significant, and powerful for good or ill. Every good thing we do reflects upon ourselves, and helps to build character; and while we are adding stone upon stone to our own structure, often, without our knowing it, another is building beside us, and unconsciously following our leading. This world is not a playground, but a workshop. The Son of God is the Master-builder. Under his guidance beauty will grow from deformity, and graceful proportions from unseemly confusion; and by and by we shall see the halo of light which surrounds him, surrounding also every one to whom he imparts his divine grace, and we shall go about our duties with this wonderful brightness surrounding us if we follow where he leads; if we follow!

The strong purpose of our lives must be to attain to the highest; but we must not stop there.

Only meaning to do a thing, amounts to nothing. What if the clouds should say, "We mean to drop rain to refresh the earth," and yet should withhold the rain? What if the fruit tree should say, "I mean to grow, blossom and bear fruit," and neither grow, nor blossom, nor bear fruit? What if the sun should say, "I mean to shine," but forever hide his face behind a cloud? It is being and doing that make our lives of value. We have no right to ourselves unless we give ourselves away. The world is not indebted to us, but we to the world. "Our part on earth is not to be served, but to serve."

God does not require of us what we might do in other circumstances. He does not expect us to give time which we have not at our command, or money which we do not possess. Neither does he require us to use the talents of another person. To all he gives advantages enough to make perfect men and women of their kind. He does not expect a laborer to have the beauty and grace of a poet, or that a poet will have the practical knowledge and muscular strength of a laborer; but he does require each one to do his work cheerfully and well. A man who cannot drive a nail straight, with a simple story or song may charm the man who drives nails for him; and so it may be on the every hand; each one aiding the other in a common brotherhood, without envy, without strife, without pride or scorn.

We cannot in any way be free from responsi-

bility. Much is required of him to whom much is given. He to whom little is given, must make the best possible use of what he has. We are all building for eternity. Let us lay the walls with joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, and cement them together with love. Then, at the last day, our Heavenly Father will say to each one of us, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

X

SETTLE IT WITH JESUS

There are many things we must settle with Jesus which no human being can adjust; trials we can tell to no one, and heart-aches we must conceal even from our nearest friends. The things which wound us, which oppress or injure us, which human nature would settle with the offenders—sarcasm for sarcasm, harsh word for harsh word, unkind deed for unkind deed—following the old interpretation of the law, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. But we who belong to Christ have no right to return evil for evil, to retaliate or revenge. He has taught us how to meet wrong and injustice, and we ought not dare to meet them in any other way than that which he has taught by precept and example.

When our accustomed serenity is disturbed suddenly, and we are nearly overpowered by the tumult within us, then should we go away alone and settle it with Jesus. When we are unjustly blamed for some unpleasant occurrence and we cannot make any one understand that we are not in fault, all we can do is to carry our trouble to Jesus. When our pride is wounded by our equals, or perhaps by our inferiors, but who re-

gard themselves as being far superior to ourselves, and we are angry because we are found trailing our armor in the dust instead of wearing it, we should go to Jesus at once and tell him all about it. When recognition is denied us and we are set aside by those who are less intelligent or less refined than we are, who can understand our position better than he?

There are many times when our hearts are restless and disturbed when we cannot assign any reason for it, when we realize that our blessings are many, and that we ought to be happy, but are not; then all we can do is to go to Jesus. He will search us and try us, and find out the cause for all our restlessness, and apply the remedy in love and tenderness.

There are many things about which there is a great difference of opinion which we must settle with him. Shall we frequent the theater? Is it right for us to spend our time in idle amusements; in the mere formalities of society; in meeting the demands of those for whom we have no affection, and who have no real interest in us? Is it right to keep late hours, to dance to excess, to eat and drink that which slowly undermines our health?

Should we look upon those less favored than ourselves in worldly circumstances as our inferiors regardless of their true worth? Do we not prove our own inferiority by this false position? Ought we to speak ill of others unless circumstances require us to tell what we know to be

true? Let Jesus answer all these questions. Human judgment is rarely free from prejudice. He only can decide impartially. He sees everything through the bright light which surrounds the throne. His judgment is as clear as the light of heaven. He knows even the subtle influences which surround us. There is no dimness in his vision. There are no beams in his eyes, no doubts in his mind; and loving us supremely, he can but guide us for our good. He will answer all our questions in ways that cannot be mistaken, if we really desire to know his will. If we desire our own way, his answer is not always clear to us, for it is in some degree modified by our own preconceived opinions.

Blessed will be the time when we settle everything with Jesus; when we no longer trust to our own judgment; when we no longer cry out anxiously, "What shall I do?" Blessed indeed to have no more harassing care, to be at rest in him! We have all experienced hours of peace which passes all understanding, but to have this peace at all times, Jesus must be close at hand. To settle all our difficulties, he must abide with us, that quick as thought his presence may be felt, his hand pressed, and his strength imparted. Thus only can we perform faithfully the common duties of life, moving quietly above their vexations, hiding from others our annoyances as the calmly flowing river hides the rough places of its stony and uneven bed.

But many cry out, "My heart is sinful; my speech is wicked; my house is in disorder; I am not prepared to entertain a King." If we shut Christ out with the plea, "I am unworthy that thou shouldst come under my roof," then do we shut him out forever, for we can never become worthy of his abiding presence by our own efforts. It is he who will make our hearts fit temples for the King of Glory. We should invite him to come in, not because we are worthy of him, but because he loves us, and stands always knocking at the door, and he will enter and abide, and we may know that he is with us in the same way that we know our dearest friend is near us. Though we are not looking at him, or really thinking of him, we are conscious of his presence. We need not think of Jesus to the exclusion of other things, but we may have the joy of his presence in the home, or wherever we may be; his helpful sympathy and imparted strength in our work and in our care, and his guidance in all our difficulties. Many think of him as being at some remote corner of the universe, except on especial occasions when he condescends to draw nearer. He is just as near to every one of us as we desire. How blind must they be who admit him not to close communion, and then complain that clouds obscure their vision; that they have not as much light as they wish; that God and heaven seem far away.

We cannot follow a guide who is so far from

us that we can not see him, nor hear his voice, and how can we follow Jesus unless we are near him? How keep our spiritual vision clear unless he be with us to bring light out of darkness? As the branches wither and die separated from the vine, so do we die spiritually, separated from Jesus. Without him we are cumberers of the ground. Without his abiding presence we are in danger of being assailed and overcome by a vigilant and powerful enemy. Left to ourselves, we are helpless indeed. How safe we are if we carry everything to him. How strong if we clasp his hand. In his calm presence how insignificant are the daily worries and anxieties. The doubts and questionings which have hitherto perplexed us vanish away. The crooked and tangled things become straight, all the things which once so wounded and vexed us lose their power over us, and all our restlessness disappears in the presence of Peace!

XI

FAITH AND WORKS

We are always asking something of our Heavenly Father, as if we were always hungry and in need, and think it strange that so much praying does not bring the desired answer to our prayers. Are not many of our petitions faithless? Is not God's answer to every prayer, "As your faith is, so be it unto you?" Unless, indeed, the granting of our request would do us harm. There are prayers offered every day, the answers to which would make men dumb with astonishment. Men pray too often into the air, and there is no warmth of love in such prayers. They reach no farther than the atmosphere in which the vibrations of sound lose themselves. They are not the prayers of faith.

We pray that God will take care of the poor, but do not help the answering of our prayer by our works. We pray, "Abide with me, Oh Lord," but we do not really believe that he will abide with us. We pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," but do not believe that he will give it to us, for how we fret over that same daily bread!

"Ask and it shall be given you," is true of everything which it is best for us to have. If

God deny us anything, it is in the same spirit in which we deny our children many things. If our prayers are not always answered just as we wish, we need not think that they are unheard by God. The feeblest uplifting of the heart to him is noticed and considered. Why not pray in faith that God will answer unless there be a good reason why our request should be denied?

Do we not pray too much and praise too little? While we are admonished to pray without ceasing, are we not also commanded to rejoice always? Should not praying and rejoicing accompany each other? Should not praise precede or follow every prayer? Is not our cup of blessing so full that our prayers will turn to praise?

Why be always poor, and hungry and naked, when, if we are hungry, it is because we only taste the bread of life, and then return to our common fare; if we are naked, it is because we will not put on the robes of righteousness offered to us by Jesus; if we are thirsty it is because we only sip at the waters of life instead of taking full draughts at the fountain. Why do we sit in our poverty crying, "Oh, Father, I am poor and needy, clothe and feed me; I am a poor, miserable sinner, save me; I am falling at every step, oh, lead me!" And still the same cry, day after day, turning a deaf ear to the answering of our Father, "I give thee bread, eat and hunger no more. I clothe thee, put on these white robes. I pardon all thy sins, go and sin no more. Take my hand

in thine, and thou shalt nevermore walk alone."

Why not take God at his word? He hears the prayer even before we utter it, and is more ready to give good gifts to us than we think. Under the shadow of his wings, there is rest and peace. We are not beggars at his gates, but heirs of his kingdom, and with light hearts and radiant faces we may go singing towards our eternal home. God blesses us wonderfully even when our faith is like a grain of sand. What may he not do for us when we rely upon him with the strong confidence of children? With such faith, good works, almost without limit, naturally follow, and these good works begin in our own hearts, and in our daily living, for thus, and thus only, are we prepared to extend our works beyond ourselves. Faith and pure living are inseparable. True religion is undefiled. If men who profess to be religious are not so, it is not that religion itself is wanting in any good element, but that they fall short of the standard raised on high that all may see it, even Jesus Christ.

How dares one call himself a Christian who is not Christ-like? How can he live in conformity to the world, and give his neighbors occasion to charge him with dishonorable conduct and little meannesses which a noble man of the world would scorn. A true Christian is God-like. A God-like man towers so far above his fellow-men, that they cannot fail to acknowledge his superiority. Alas that there are so many who are only Christians in

name! That so many, who might shine as stars even here, have only a smoldering faith beneath the embers of worldliness, whose light never shines forth, whose works are according to their weak faith, and who barely press into heaven through gates ajar, instead of entering triumphantly through gates open wide, with loud hosannas greeting the blood-bought and glorified ones whose faith and works here opened to them a glorious inheritance with the highest ones in heaven, at the right hand of Jesus.

The faith which every one ought to have is like the faith of little children in their parents. They lay their hands in ours with perfect confidence. A mother is all in all to her child. If the mother is near, all is well. If mother's hand can be touched in the light of day or the darkness of night, the child is at rest. There is no questioning in the mind of the obedient child when he is denied his requests. My little boy often asks me for that which is not best that he should do, or that he should have, and I say, "No, darling," and he answers, contentedly, "All right."

When we hold the hand of God in perfect love and confidence, all doubt and fear will be cast out, and whatever answer God may give to our requests, we can say, with perfect resignation, "It is, indeed, all right." The works which will accompany such faith will be holy living, and a constant giving of ourselves to others as Jesus gave himself to us, not in a sacrificial way, as he

did, but in humanly divine way, from day to day, doing all the little things of life perfectly, graciously, gracefully, as he would do them; for life is mostly made up of little things, and but few of us are called to do great things.

God will assign to us our daily tasks, and we need take no care or thought as to whether we might be doing something greater or better. It is what God wishes us to do, and that is enough. Be sure that he will not fail to give us all we can do well, nor fail to place us just where he wishes us to be. We are not to fret, if sometimes the place seem too humble, or the work too hard. We have taken up the cross to follow him whose lot was, indeed, humble, and whose task was arduous, and we must not shrink, but clasp the strong hand the tighter, and lean more heavily upon the strong arm, and our Lord will bring us through victorious.

The power of faith is beyond measure. If the members of one large church had the faith they might have, did the works they might do, what a revolution would that church make within the circle of its influence! If the members of all the Christian churches in the world were really Christ-like, would we need to wait long for the answer to our prayer, "Thy kingdom come?"

Among men, no professional sham will be accepted as the genuine thing. Men feel it in their hearts when another is sincere, when he stands firm as a rock for right and truth, when he scorns

every thing unworthy the name he bears, and lives by faith; and they are right in judging of the quality of his faith by the work wrought in his character by that faith. This faith which is like a well of water springing up into everlasting life, is a most wonderful gift from God. He holds it ready for us in his exhaustless treasure-house. All we have to do is to open our hearts to receive it. How gloriously it lifts us above the friction of every-day life.

How easy, with such a faith, become the works. How naturally, and without apparent effort do we serve God, and do and endure his will, thus fulfilling in our lives the familiar words, "The just shall live by faith."

Rev. F. B. Meyer tells the following story:

"On the *Campania*, by which I crossed the ocean, there were Christian men who held steerage services. They talked about these services at dinner, and an infidel happened to be at the same table. He heard them talk about their faith, their church, and their religion. One day he decided to go to see what their service was like. He put an orange in his pocket, intending to eat it. As he passed through the gangway, a poor old woman, in a very rusty dress, sat there fast asleep, her hands folded in her lap, open. A thought struck him. He took the orange out of his pocket and put it in her hands. She went on sleeping, and he went to hear the talk. When he came back, the old woman had waked, and with a benignant smile, she sat looking at the orange.

“ ‘Mother, how are you?’ he said. ‘Oh, well, thank you; rather better than I was just now.’

“ ‘How better?’ he asked.

“ ‘Why, look at the orange, sir.’

“ ‘Well, what of the orange?’

“ ‘Well, you know I could not eat the food they gave me, and I said to my Heavenly Father to-day, “I wish I might have a little fruit. I would like to have an orange.” So I went to sleep; and when I woke an orange was in my hand. My Heavenly Father put it there.’

“ ‘Oh, no!’ said the infidel. ‘There is no Heavenly Father. I put it there.’

“ ‘Ah! but you would not have put it there if the Heavenly Father had not told you to.’ ”

Lovely, wasn’t it, that she should wake to find in her hands that for which she had prayed just before going to sleep. This ought to have touched the infidel’s heart. Perhaps it did, and made him wonder, if there might not be, after all, an all-loving Father without whose notice not even a sparrow falls to the ground.

According! Oh, the grand possibilities contained in that word! According to your faith! “What is faith? To walk right on to the edge of the precipice and then stop? ‘No! Walk on!’ ‘What, set my feet upon nothing?’ ‘Yes, upon nothing, if it be in the way of duty; boldly set your feet on nothing, and a solid rock from the everlasting hills will meet your feet at every step that you take in the path of duty; only take it

unwaveringly, and in faith.' ” “Oh, but we must see where we are going,” you say. Dear friend, how often do you really see where you are going? How can you see, when all the future is as a closed highway?

In his own country, Jesus did not many mighty works because of unbelief. Many times we pray for healing of soul and body; and if we listen attentively, we may hear him saying, oh, with what infinite love, and infinite pity and regret, “I cannot because of your unbelief!”

Perfect faith will help to keep us well, and strong, and beautiful in body and in spirit. It will make our faces shine, and our feet will run to do good deeds for very joy of the privilege. Our hearts will sing for joy, and the work apportioned to us will be performed cheerfully and well. It will bring us into harmony with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It will hold us as an anchor through all winds and tides, through brightest sunshine and through darkest night, and although we may be poor and lowly and unworthy of notice in the eyes of the world, it will make us courtiers in the palace of the King!

XII

NOT BELIEVING BECAUSE NOT UNDERSTANDING

There are those who do not believe the Bible because they do not understand it, who do not believe in God because he is veiled in mystery. What do we understand? The smallest leaf that glistens in the sunshine and quivers in the trees is incomprehensible to us. Were we to try millions of years we could not make one. The blade of grass grows silently from the tiny seed, we know not how. Slowly, slowly the acorn sends forth a tree which defies wind and storm in its strength and majesty, and Ruskin looks at it with wonder to say, "What a thought it was when God thought of a tree!"

Look at the flowers, so varied in their beauty. Whence do they derive their color and fragrance? How is it possible that so much loveliness can be centered in a lily or a rose? How is it done? We are dumb before these thoughts of God expressed in the grass, the flowers, the trees, and in all growing things. And there are mightier mysteries than these. Who understands the laws by which we and all other objects on the face of the earth are kept from being thrown off into

space in its rapid whirl on its own axis, as it majestically travels on its ceaseless journey around the sun? Look into the heavens on a clear winter night, and comprehend, if you can, what you behold. We do not even understand ourselves. Who can explain the union of the soul and body during life, and the separation of the same at death? Who can tell when and how the soul-life comes to us? And nothing can be more wonderful and mysterious than the reproduction of species throughout the animal and vegetable kingdom.

Thus we may go on from one thing to another until we are forced to cry out, "Alas, we know not anything!" and to feel that we are tossed upon an ocean of uncertainty and unrest without a rudder to direct our course, unless we look upon everything as the work of an infinite God of Love and Omniscience, who holds the world in the hollow of his hand; who directs and disposes all things for our highest good; who has created all the beauty and loveliness of this world for our happiness.

God has revealed himself to us in his Word, in nature, and in the person of his Son so fully that we may love and honor him, and delight to do his will. We may enjoy to the utmost, all the beauty and endless mystery of nature in her richness and profusion. Bearing about with us something of the divinity in which we were created, we may be kings and queens upon the earth; but only as we

are obedient subjects of our Heavenly King, toward whom disloyalty is the highest treason, justly punishable by banishment from his presence forever!

He who gives to the flowers their perfume and color, to the sky its blue, to the clouds their splendor, to the forest trees their varied shades of green and their brilliant autumnal hues, to the elements their power for good or ill, to the lightning its tongue of flame and its voice of thunder, to the earthquake its terror, can do infinitely greater things than these in cleansing our hearts in the blood of Jesus, and restoring us to his favor, and to a place in his kingdom. Shall we refuse to believe this most wonderful of all mysteries because we cannot understand it? Must we wait for a clear insight into the things of God before we believe them? Can we make ourselves as gods to pry into that which is hidden from us? Is it not absurd to expect to know what God only knows? The finite cannot fathom the infinite, and who can find out God?

Milk for babes, and meat for strong men. We are his babes. All that we can grasp and use he has given to us, and it is neither occasion for regret or for distrust that we cannot compass the universe with our understanding. God is; we are. What can feeble ones do but rest in the all-powerful? What can ignorant ones do but learn of the Omniscient? We have all eternity before us in which to learn of God and of his mighty works.

Here we only master the alphabet; for this is a training-school, a small beginning; and unless we learn well the Alpha and Omega, and all that lies between of the lesson God has given us to learn here, we cannot expect to understand the language of heaven.

If we wish to become proficient in any branch of study, we do not begin with that part which is most difficult, and throw it aside in disgust, saying, "I will have nothing to do with it, for it is impossible to understand it;" but we begin with the rudiments, and advance slowly, step by step, like a little child learning to walk, until all obstacles are surmounted, and what at first was incomprehensible, becomes easy and well understood. If we sit at the feet of Jesus, willing to be taught the alphabet of the Word, willing to be in the lowest class until we are prepared to go up higher, much that seems dark and difficult now will be illuminated and made easy as we go on in loving obedience to the Divine will.

What a comfort it is to be sure that what we do not know Jesus knows, and wherein we fail, he, with tender, brotherly love, will intercede for us, and cover our defects with his own righteousness, and present us faultless before the throne of God to go no more out forever!

XIII

NO MIDDLE WAY

“He that is not for me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”

Can anything be plainer than this from the lips of the Son of God? There are two powers reigning on the earth, and one or the other must control us. We are either serving God or Satan. There is no more subtle snare than that the prince of evil throws around his victims than that of the middle way. He is always trying to make them believe that between God's path and his path there is a broad highway in which they may walk at their ease, not troubling themselves as to whether they are right or wrong, so long as they have a choice of good things from the trees overhanging this highway, and from which they can pluck the sweetest fruits without discrimination as to whether they grow on the right hand or on the left. There are multitudes of people who are thus led blindly on who know not who is leading them, and who would consider it an insult if you should even gently hint that they are not in the way of safety. The web thrown around them is delicate, its texture of pleasing colors, and they do not feel it tightening closer and closer. They

are not conscious of danger. If you whisper to them of it they laugh at your fears, and go on gayly to a final hopeless awakening to their real position.

Many enjoy the pleasures of sin who do not acknowledge their master. They imagine that they can break away from the service of God without entering any other service. They think they are free. Oh, how great is their mistake! We are never free until we are born into God's kingdom; then, indeed, we are free born; and no power can take away from us our birthright. Another snare which Satan lays for those whom he desires to possess, is to conceal himself behind superstition, and make them believe that he is only a myth, a fabulous creature invented to frighten simple-minded people.

It is true that we can neither see him nor hear him nor touch him, he being a spirit, but we have proof enough of his existence by the havoc he has made in the world, which, without him, would be to this day a paradise. He is a liar in very essence, and many are deceived by him, and led on step by step to destruction. For this reason God has drawn fixed and indelible lines between right and wrong. Do not try to obliterate them; you cannot. There are no crooked paths of God's making; none which leans just a little toward the wrong. Out of God's path you are in Satan's path, and there is no broad road nor even a foot-path between them.

The things which are of the greatest importance to us are by twos and not by threes; good and evil, sin and holiness, life and death, God and Satan, heaven and hell. Either we are the friends of God, or his enemies. The paths in this world which lead on to the next are already marked out, and we are either in the road to hell, or in the road to heaven. If we think that we are in a path between the two, we deceive ourselves.

Some think it makes no difference in which path we walk, and that a loving Creator will bring every one out right, somehow, at last. Do you think that the Son of God and King of Heaven would have left his throne to come to this world to take upon himself the trial of being human, to endure a life of poverty, suffering and hard labor, and die a disgraceful death upon the cross if it makes no difference, if there be a middle way between right and wrong in which multitudes may safely walk?

There are few who will not admit that it is our highest duty, and for our highest good to love and obey God; but many such seem to think that the teachings of the Bible, which is his revealed will, are meant for others than themselves. They are good enough now. They do not need a Savior. If they do the best they know, God will not reject them. How can any one do the best he knows and still reject the Word of God? Where in that Word does God suggest a com-

promise between good and evil? On the contrary, the contrasts between right and wrong, between the position of the righteous and the wicked are everywhere strongly marked.

God has left no escape from the thunderings of his anger but through the acceptance of his Son as Mediator and Redeemer. This way he has provided for our salvation. It is the only way. We might have suggested some other, but our plans are as nothing before his plans. His law is perfect. His testimonies are sure. Who shall gainsay them? Who shall so blaspheme God as to say, "My way is better than thy way?" Yet many do this in deed if not in word; in thought if not in deed. How can men call God severe for drawing lines so straight and even, when they go astray so easily? How could he be a perfect governor of the world and do otherwise? "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left; remove thy feet from evil."

Young man or young woman, whoever you are, high or low, rich or poor, known or unknown, look the truth fearlessly in the face, and deal with things as they are, and not with things as you would like to have them, and direct your life accordingly. Be not deceived by false appearances. We have to deal with real things. Arm yourself for a fight with wrong and injustice and

deceit. These things are in the world, and we have to meet them. The evil one is their originator. Meet them defiantly with God and truth on your side. Lean always towards God, and you will pass through life's ills unharmed. Lean only a little towards Satan, and you are in imminent danger. You must do one or the other of these, for there is no indifferent middle path.

The idea of being in the service of such a being as Satan is too repulsive for men to accept; and for this reason they do not realize nor acknowledge that they are in his service, neither will they take sides with God. But it is impossible to serve God a little, and to serve Satan a little. How vain to attempt it! Have the manliness, at least to show your colors. If you have lived until now without being called upon to determine your position, find out at once where you stand. If you are not for God, you are for the evil one. Does it humiliate you to think of it? Do you say, "Impossible!" It is not only possible, but the living truth! Does it startle you? It may well startle you. Perhaps you have never thought of it in this way before; and this is one proof, if you are not for Christ, that you are in the hands of your spiritual enemy, even in the hands of Satan himself. He has purposely lulled you to sleep, and left you in quiet. Wake up! Rouse yourself to the utmost! He has breathed upon you his poisonous breath! Break away from him! Trust him and yourself no longer! Look to God!

He alone is worthy your confidence and service. He alone can help you on to everlasting glory and honor! How can you take a black-hearted monster, the prince of devils, to be your guide? Flee for your life to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. Ashamed to come? He bids you come and wash in his blood and be made clean that you may follow him in the path to glory. Will you come? I plead with you to come!

Oh, how blind you are if you persistently reject him; if you grow to be old, and still reject him; if you call him "Lord, Lord," and yet do not keep his sayings, but build your foundations upon the sand, to be thrown down in that day when nothing will stand which is not founded upon the Rock of Ages!

Service is joy, and life a grand victory, if we are in the service of God. How absurd to try to free ourselves from him! Helpless in his sight as little children are in our sight, wayward and rebellious toward him as children are to us, how he must pity us! And oh, how he must love us to bear patiently with us so long, with our indifference to him and to his dear Son, still hoping to save us from eternal death. Then let us look to ourselves at once! Let us not lose a single moment. Let us flee to Jesus, and let him clothe us in his own righteousness. Be not ashamed to put on that spotless robe; for if you are ashamed to confess him before men, then will he have reason

to be ashamed of you in that day when he comes to judge the world.

It may be that you shrink from entering the narrow path. The path of righteousness is narrow only in comparison with the broad, much frequented path of sin. It is wide enough for all to walk therein who will. It lies through peaceful valleys, and beside still waters. The fruit of the land is sweet to the taste, and refreshing to all who eat of it. Jesus walks in the midst of it, and his banner of love overshadows all. It may be that you have already entered this narrow path, but are so far from your guide that you are frequently straying and losing your way. Keep close to Jesus, and you can never lose the way.

To be for God, to have his protecting, fatherly care, to have Omniscience and Omnipotence on your side, and Infinite Love, how glorious! When Omniscience and Omnipotence were embodied in humanity that heaven might touch the earth and transfigure it, what glory and honor were bestowed upon us that we were counted worthy the sacrifice which elicited the wonder and admiration of all heaven, and which might well cause all heaven and earth to bow in adoration before our Lord, crying "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." "Blessing and honor and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever!"

XIV

ARE WE GROWING OLD?

We are apt to think when we reach forty-five or fifty years that we are beginning to grow old. That life is at its ebb; that whatever preparation for the fulfillment of life's duties we have neglected, cannot be made now; that if we find ourselves at this period of life uneducated, undeveloped, wanting in this or that acquirement or accomplishment, there is little use in trying to make up for it now. We are too old. Life is too far gone. We shall soon be growing gray and passing on into the shadows. But let us look back a little. How many years of our life were devoted to physical growth? Fourteen or fifteen. How much of this time to mental development? Seven or eight. How much time at the college or seminary? Four or five, making eighteen or twenty in all. If we were prepared to enter upon active life at the early age of twenty, we have had only twenty-five or thirty years of activity, and are worn out at that; are getting past our prime! The life-work of many does not begin until they are thirty or forty, or even fifty or sixty; and if we are cherishing any morbid, unhealthy fancies in regard to our waning powers, let them be put

aside, and let us remember that we are now in our prime; and if we have already wasted so much of our life that we are still unprepared for earnest work, let us begin our preparation at once. Thirty or forty years may be added to our life, and is it not worth while to spend three, four, ten years, if need be, in making ready for that "added length of days," even at forty-five or fifty?

Our blessed Lord spent thirty years in preparation for a ministry of three years. Should not this be a lesson of patient perseverance and a rebuke to our haste and superficialness in our own education and development? It is unfortunate that it should be necessary to begin any preparation late in life, for one does not then learn so easily, and there are many more distractions and cares; but it is far better than not at all. What we need to do first is to rid ourselves of the idea that we are too old to learn. The best part of life is before us. Forty-five or fifty years of experience have not been lost. We can look upon life more calmly, and with a clearer vision. We can weigh people and things more accurately, and adjust them in their proper places as regards ourselves. We are stronger in our manhood and womanhood, and stronger in faith and hope. Many things have disappointed us, but there is much left which cannot disappoint.

We have, perhaps, spent much time in the accumulation of property, in the care of children,

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in seeking to advance our own interests. Now we may be able to give more time to others in such ways as are presented to us, and if our years for preparation have not been idly wasted, how much good may every one of us accomplish!

Forty years seem long when we think only of our life here, especially to those who have experienced much sorrow and many changes; but in the thought of the eternal years, it is only a beginning. When we realize that to the soul there comes neither decay nor death, how can we ever feel that we are growing old? When millions and millions of years have passed, we shall still be young. Why should we consider the years that are gone as a large part of our lives? We are babes still, cradle-rocked in the arms of God, still needing his guiding hand that we may be kept from falling, still loving the foolish things of this world, and often thinking our own way the best. Old at forty-five or fifty? Why, we are just beginning to walk a little by catching hold of objects nearest to us. Ours is but a child's comprehension of the all that is begun here to be perfected in heaven.

As regards this life, we may indeed feel that the dignity of manhood and womanhood is ours at fifty, that the season of life called youth is wholly passed, that we stand at a point where the past and the future are about evenly balanced. If it be a grand thing to have lived so long, it will be grander still to live thirty or forty



years longer. It would seem that after so much experience the rest of life might count for much. That there need be no more time wasted, no more energy spent upon unworthy objects or pursuits, no more feeding upon common fare, but that the rest of life should be rich and full, with each day showing a better fitness for heaven, until we are bowed down with age, yet only for a little while here, to wake some morning yonder to find ourselves forever young.

Then take up your life-work just where you have laid it down. You are still young and strong for work and with the richness and fullness of advancing years, there may come into your soul joy and peace, the conscious reward of work well done. Try to comprehend the all of life. Avoid using it as if it were merely something to be endured; as if the life-battle were only to gain a sustenance for the body. Even to the humblest laborer life should be something more than this. It should be to him the threshold of heaven; all his troubles and hardships only stepping-stones thither. None needs be a mere laborer. Work is not incompatible with the deepest spirituality, the highest sensitiveness and refinement. To be spiritual it is not necessary to retire within secluded walls, or to lay aside the active pursuits of life. Spiritual and temporal things need not clash. As the body and spirit serve each other, so the natural and spiritual go together in our lives. We need not seek to separate them. We

need not think that spirituality is impossible when days are filled with ordinary labor.

The Savior of the world, by leading the way, made it possible for us to perform the humblest duty, and at the same time keep the mind clear, the heart pure, and the spirit calm. While looking at the stars we need not stumble in our way. While our hands are busy, the spirit may be free. It is desirable to have our surroundings pleasant and beautiful, to have the dwelling cheerful and attractive with artistic decoration, many books, and fine pictures. How much more desirable a spiritual beauty, with resources for unfailing happiness in a mind at rest. In one's self must be the source of the spring which will keep fresh and green all the pathway of life, and secure a perpetual youth. What if the walls are bare and the house desolate? In the soul there may be wealth and beauty and joy which will endure forever, and without which all external adornment and apparent joy will be as ashes.

Whatever your age may be, train yourself to the highest culture. Begin at the right place that you may lose neither time nor effort. Seek first the kingdom of God. In the Lord's prayer, the petitions, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done," come before all personal petitions. If all had begun the Christian life in childhood, what an advantage would have been gained; but, alas! how many have waited until they were old! To follow the wrong path forty, fifty, seventy years, and

only seek the kingdom in the last hours of life, or not at all, how dreadful!

We count the years allotted to the life of the body. The length of time allotted to the life of the soul cannot be estimated. Let not the number of years weigh too heavily upon the spirit; it can never grow old, but it can grow in goodness and knowledge, in love and purity, until it will bear the weight of declining physical powers in a sweet and heavenly manner, and second childhood will be but the renewal of the spirit's youth, and an obedient answer to the suggestion of our Savior, "Except ye become as little children ye can in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." All of us call to mind examples of this in dear old people whom we have known, when it seemed that the older they grew, the more lovely they became, until "Holiness to the Lord" was written on their foreheads.

In the prime of life we stand upon an eminence from which we can look both ways; backward to infancy, forward to old age. The long slope up which we have climbed to reach this eminence is shrouded in mist in the distance, and we cannot see its beginnings clearly. Memory fails to reveal to us the lights and shadows of infancy; but where the mist ends, clear sunshine begins, with only here and there a shadow as of a man's hand. Later, the shadows are larger, and storms threaten, but near us is a clear sky, and the clouds are bright, as at noonday. Directly above there

may be dark clouds, or a sky of heavenly blue; but we may look calmly at either, for we are nearing the slope on the other side, down which we see cool avenues and refreshing streams; and though, farther on, we fancy that we see clouds gathering, and deep, bridgeless rivers, we see beyond the river and the clouds, our Sun and Shield; in the west where the sun sets, we see heavenly glory, and through an open window in the battlements of the sky, heaven's portals glistening, and a beckoning hand, and hear a voice saying, "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee. When thou passeth through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. Sing, Oh, heavens; and be joyful, Oh, earth; and break forth into singing, Oh, mountains; for the Lord has comforted his people."

Surely we need not fear or be troubled as we enter upon the sunset slopes of life. While our bodies, after a few years, begin to lose their vigor, our spirits may mount still higher, and gain victory after victory until all the battles are fought, and we calmly wait our turn to pass into the shadows; then in a moment, to exchange the cross for the crown, the decay of earth and the feebleness of old age for the glory of immortality and days of eternal youth.

Fifty years in the past; forty, perhaps, in the

future. Is it not nearly certain that the last years may be the best, may bring forth fruit abundantly from the seed sown from childhood until now? We value time too little. What may one year do for us, or what may we do in one year? Let us reach out hands of helpfulness, reach out hands of love; and whatever we find to do, do it with our might. For when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find the fields white to the harvest, and we not reaping? Shall he find the sheaves bound and ready, and we not gathering them in? Whatever our age, shall he find us idly waiting because we are growing old?

XV

THE RISEN CHRIST

He is not here, but is risen.—Luke 24:6.

That Jesus Christ was a man of singular beauty and divine perfection, in every way surpassing the children of men, all who study his life and character must admit. That his position was unique no one can deny. Never since the world began had any one been in his place. Suspended, as it were, between heaven and earth, between ages past and ages to come, neither wholly human nor yet wholly divine, the incarnate Son of God. Most wonderful and miraculous was his birth, his life unlike that of any other man, and his victory over death that of a God. We hold sacred the days of his birth, his death and his resurrection; for are not the mysteries of these days fraught with important meanings to us all?

Jesus did not come into this world to enact a tragedy for our entertainment. The man whose birth angels heralded, whose lowly birth-place was pointed out to Wise Men seeking him, by a star, to whom God spoke out of the heavens at his baptism in the river Jordan, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," at whose death upon the cross darkness covered the face of

the earth and the veil of the temple was rent, could have been no ordinary man. He who held in control all the forces of nature, all unseen and spiritual forces, who, according to the annals of one brief chapter, cleansed the leper by his touch, healed the servant of the centurion by a word, cured Peter's wife's mother, cast out many devils, healed all the sick who were brought to him, and calmed the tempest by his "Peace be still!" was, indeed, divinely human, and humanly divine. Meekly, day by day, he bore his cross of pain and sorrow, unappreciated, misunderstood, cursed and spit upon, that we might escape eternal death; that through his life, death and resurrection, we might live through all the eternal years clothed with the white robes of his own righteousness.

Nineteen centuries have run their course, and still the bells ring out on Easter Day:

"Good news to all the world!"

"Good news to all!"

"The Lord is risen indeed!" "He is a-risen!"

This day the sepulcher has opened wide

Its doors to let the King of Glory pass!

All hail! Thou mighty, glorious One, all hail!

We crown thee victor over sin and death,

And raise our voices high in songs of praise,

And Easter lilies bring into thy courts

Sweet emblems of thy purity and love,

And low in adoration bow before

Our risen Lord, our Prophet, Priest and King!

All nature awakes to new life at this glad time. Birds sing carols, and flowers waft their fragrance toward the high heavens. The sun shines more brightly, and the trees wave their branches instinct with new life, whispering to one another, "The Lord is risen!" The little rills far up the hillside whisper it to the ferns and wind-flowers just waking out of sleep. Every leaf and bud, every blade of grass, is delighting in the freshness of its new life.

How our hearts are gladdened as we behold everywhere this awakening; and as we realize just what it all means, just what the risen Christ is to us, what peace fills our hearts, even the peace of our blessed Lord!

O blessed peace of God! Eye hath not seen,
Ear hath not heard, this wondrous, holy, thing!
More pure than air of morning bright, in May,
More sweet than perfume of the lovely rose,
Or of the lily white, fresh from his hand!
Our loved ones gone now know that peace in full.
We, too, may know its fulness; for our hearts
Through all the shining way to glory bright
Go softly with our best beloved to heaven!

This is a time for gentleness, for patience, for quiet joy; a time to forgive all known and unknown enemies, and to be more tender and true to friends. It is also a time to follow the Lord from the manger to the resurrection, and to roll off our burdens at his feet, that we may have light hearts

and bright faces and words of cheer for those who cannot see him through their sins or through their tears.

From this day let each one try to live as he lived, refusing to carry needless burdens, and making each day count much by appreciating its blessings, and using to best purpose its gifts. May the Easter bells ring out all that is unholy in the home, and ring in joy and peace which shall endure throughout the year. This is a time to make every one happy, and to give simple gifts in commemoration of the greatest gift of God to us in his dear Son. A time to hallow his name, and let his kingdom come, and his will be done in our hearts as it is done in heaven. For is not our Lord indeed risen that we may rise from the grave of dead hopes, of disappointments, of trials, of sins? And is he not our Wonderful, our Counselor, our Prince of Peace?

He is not a dead Christ. He does not mock us with promises he cannot or will not fulfill. Of the earth earthy, and knowing our needs, of heaven heavenly, and knowing his own power, he carries on his heart our burdens that we may have rest, and gives us his peace that we may not be troubled or afraid, if we go to him—if we go! What does the resurrection of the Christ teach us but that for all there will be a resurrection into new life? Old things will pass away, and we shall enter upon a more advanced stage of existence of which this life is only the threshold. It will not

be to fold our wings and sit and play upon harps and viols throughout eternity, but to be co-workers with God in all that he finds to do for his great family in this world, and, perhaps, in other worlds.

A God who can make anything so beautiful as the Easter Lily and cause it to reproduce its own kind year after year, generation after generation, with no diminishing of beauty or sweet fragrance will take care of us and our loved ones who fell asleep one day to wake in heaven. He will keep them for us, and in his presence they will grow more and more into his likeness, and we shall sometime walk with them the streets of gold and breathe the heavenly air of the New Jerusalem, the city that is builded without hands, the foundations of which are of all manner of precious stones; the first foundation is jasper, the second sapphire, the third a chalcedony, the last an amethyst!

XVI

THE PARTING OF THE WAY

At every parting of the way, look carefully for the sign of the cross ; and do not let your eyes become so dazed by the shining of the showy, gilded sign-board pointing the other way, that you do not see the words upon the cross written in letters of blood, "THIS WAY, MY CHILD."

When you are greatly perplexed, and in doubt what to do, you are at a cross-road, and it is of the utmost importance what way you take, for the termination of the two ways may be vastly remote from each other, and one of them must, of necessity, lead you entirely away from the place for which you set out.

There are many paths which cross each other, so small that you think you do not need direction, that it makes no difference which one you take. It does make much difference. Many foot-paths lead into highways, and some that seem straight in the beginning are crooked, and you waste time in taking them, even if they come out right at last. Time is short, and you need to follow the straight and unobstructed paths to worthy goals. Even at the outset, there is no time to lose ; and at twenty, thirty, forty years, surely there is none.

You sometimes think that you would like to go back and start again. How much better to have gone rightly from the beginning, so as to waste no time in retracing your steps. And then, the course of the years is ever onward; we cannot retrace our steps.

Sometimes you think there is some mistake, because your path is narrow and obscure, leading through unfrequented regions. If you are following the path marked out by the sign of the cross, do not doubt, do not be discouraged. You know not how soon or how suddenly it may emerge into the broad highway, or into the golden streets of heaven. The cross-roads and diverging paths in life are many. We are often compelled to ask, "Which is the right way?" Dare to ask it of no one but Jesus Christ. His answer will always be, "The way of the cross."

There are paths which look pleasant and safe, wherein we see many walking, into which we are tempted to enter. Can we place a cross at the entrance to these paths without desecrating it? Can we walk in them without grieving our Lord?

To what are we asking the way? To wealth, to honor, to fame? The cross leads not to these. It points in the way he trod. Are you able to follow in the thorny, desolate way, rejected of men, crucified as to your own will, then go by the sign of the cross. He endured all this, and more, for you, and is it not a small matter for you to give your life to him that he may use it as he

wills? While one side of the cross is dyed in blood, the other side is illuminated and emits rays of light which pierce far into the unknown path before us, revealing Jesus walking as our guide; and if in moments of discouragement we think some other way might lead more smoothly on to the same goal, we have only to listen quietly to hear the gentle voice, "This is the way, my child!"

The cross points to everything pure and beautiful. The other sign-board points to selfishness, to sin, and to a final dwarfing of the soul to minute proportions, so that God would hardly recognize it as the work of his hands. The cross here points to the crown in heaven, to golden harps, to everlasting glory; the other sign-board to chains, to final condemnation, to endless remorse.

Do not think that the cross points one way to all. It turns upon the pivot of God's love, and points in different ways, according to his will. The way to some is over a hill Difficulty, or through sloughs of despondency, or through shadowy valleys. But the Guide is always at hand, to assist at need. To some there are lions in the way, but they need not fear. God will send an angel to shut the lions' mouths.

When we come to diverging paths, one may seem smooth and safe, the other rough and dangerous. It is quite natural to choose the smooth way; but if the cross points to the dangerous path, enter it fearlessly. There is no danger too

great to encounter for his sake who bore the cross, and often, things that frighten us are only lions chained.

When hard questions perplex, look carefully to see which way the cross points. When tempted to follow broad and inviting paths, let us look for the cross. When we are weary and discouraged, the cross points to rest after toil. When we are sin-burdened, it points to the Lamb of God, our sacrifice. When we are lonely, it points to Jesus, our best friend. When we mourn, it points to him, our comforter.

“THIS WAY, MY CHILD.” Ever near us, placing at every parting of the way his cross, is our Redeemer, who died that we might live forever, redeemed, glorified, a great company which no man can number around the throne, forever blessed, with crosses all left behind, and crowns resplendent with jewels, and the glory of God and his Son filling all. The cross at the beginning of the way, and at many turning-points, and at the end the crown of glory for all who forsake not the way of the cross!

Make a wise choice at the parting of the way!

XVII

WORDS OF CHEER FOR THE AGED

Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.—Psalm 71:9.

And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you. I have made and I will bear; even I will carry you and will deliver you.—Isaiah 46:4.

They shall still bring forth fruit in old age.—Psalm 92:14.

When we are young, everything wears a roseate hue. Nothing daunts us. We feel, in the glow of hope and in the strength of young manhood and young womanhood, that no obstacles are too great to overcome. That success lies before us; that there is no such word as fail. But in the deepening shadows, when the eye begins to grow dim and the step to falter, when we cannot hear quite so well as formerly and all the senses are less acute, and we begin to stoop and to lean more heavily upon the proffered arm of a dear friend, perhaps our courage fails a little and things do not look so bright to us. We dread approaching infirmity and possible helplessness, and pray most fervently that God will not cast us off in old age or forsake us when our strength fails; and the answer quickly comes; "Even to hoar hairs will I carry you and will deliver you."

Oh, how sweet this precious promise of our

Lord! Will carry you! As the mother carries her child, too weak to walk alone, so the Lord will carry you, my good friend, and will deliver you from every evil thing. Rest in his arms and fear not. Over hills and through valleys, across deep ravines, up steep precipices, over dark and impenetrable chasms he will bear you safe to the "land of the leal."

They say that you are growing old because your hair is silvered, and there are crow's feet on your forehead and your step is not so firm and elastic as before. But they are mistaken. That is not you. The brow is wrinkled, but the brow is not you. It is the body only which is growing old, the building in which you have lived so long that it is tumbling down around you; but you, yourself, are young, younger than you ever were before, nearer to eternal youth! When you go out from this old building, you will be like the butterfly emerging from the chrysalis, beautiful, young, glorified, shining, all-glorious in the likeness of Christ, if you are one of the redeemed.

What if there be clouds? Without clouds there can be no sunset glory; and a morning without clouds will soon dawn upon you. Then do not feel sad because your body is growing old. Your spirit is young, and your last days may be your best days while you are waiting on the borderland for the coming of his feet who will bear you across the river, into the New Jerusalem! How blessed! Work all done, victories all won, with

sins all washed away, with hearts at peace with God and man, resting in the arms of Love, eternally young, waiting to behold the King in his glory!

“The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree. They shall bring forth fruit in old age.” The palm tree has a long life. If pressed downwards by heavy weights it will spring back into its natural shape on the weights being removed. The more it is oppressed the more it flourishes. The older it is, the stronger and broader is the top. Palm trees produce from the same root a number of shoots, which form, by spreading, a kind of forest. To flourish like the palm tree is to be beautiful in Christ’s beauty, graceful in his grace and useful without limitations, bearing fruit even in old age; to have the resiliency of the palm tree when old age weighs heavily, or misfortunes overtake us; to see to it that the older we grow, the greater will be our influence for good.

“The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree.” Claim this promise for yourself, dear friend, and take comfort and courage. As one little root or seed will, after a time, produce a forest, so the smallest deed done in Christ’s name, whether we are young or old, will grow, and grow throughout the ages!

Turn your faces away from the cold and frozen North, and face the sunny South. Look at the bright things of life; the smiles of little children, the joy of the lover and the maiden, the greater

joy of the father and mother beholding their first-born child. Take comfort in your children and your grandchildren. Your smile is a benediction to them. Although you may not always realize it, you hold a warm place in their hearts which no one else can fill.

If you have none upon whom to smile, no one to receive your benediction, then smile at your Lord, whose love and sympathy are even more precious than that of the dearest child. Put away gloom from your life. Are not roses and lilies blooming all about you? Open your eyes to see them. Roses have thorns? Do not thorns also have roses?

Perhaps you are feeble and lame; perhaps unable to walk. Think of Jess in "A Window in Thrums." For more than twenty years she had not been able to go so far as the door. With her husband or daughter to lean upon, and her hand clutching her staff, twice a day, when she was strong, she took the journey between her bed and the window where stood her chair. Thinking of Samuel Fletcher's case made her awful thankful for the lenient way the Lord had always dealt with her; for Samuel could not move out of his chair, and she could come and go between hers and her bed. "Mebbe," she would say, "ye think I'm no better off than Samuel, but that's a terrible mistake. What a glory it would have been to him if he could have gone from one end o' the kitchen to the ither! Aye, I'm sure o' that!"

Jess was facing the sunny South and smiling into the face of her Lord.

Growing old? Aye, yes, it must be so. That is, the body fails. Through sympathy, the mind may fail too; but this is only for a season. We cannot hold up the days or the years. They advance steadily, one by one, until, almost before we know it, we count sixty, seventy, perhaps eighty years. The days of our youth are almost lost in the dim past, and the heavenly shores seem so near that we can almost hear the music, and see the angelic throng before the throne singing a new song—"Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people, and nation. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing. Blessing, and honor, and glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever!"

We do grow old. It cannot be helped; and we are set aside, in a way, to make room for our sons and daughters; and we can never again occupy our old places, in the world, or in our homes. Well, and what then? Then, if we are wise, we may occupy an especial place of honor in the world, and in the home. Children and grandchildren may love and reverence us, and strive to make our failing powers less irksome to us. By

our cheerfulness and hopefulness, we may add to the happiness of the family life.

The years may weigh heavily, but it is only for a little while. Beyond the smiling and the weeping, there is rest and peace. Close, close under the shadow of the Almighty, you are protected. You are loved with an infinite love, and upheld day and night by the Everlasting Arms! God holds you safe for the blessed awakening into full vigor, to be eternally young! Certainly it is desperately lonely for you, if your husband or your wife has gone on before you, or if you have never had the most precious earthly blessing, a loving husband or a devoted wife; but there are compensations. Try to find them. They may be nearer at hand than you think. At all events do not complain. Count your daily blessings. Review the pleasant hours of your past life. Bury the sorrows deep in God's love.

Look forward! You cannot change the past, and you waste time and strength worrying about it. Grow sweeter every day. There is no place for grumblers in this world or in any other world. Let it be said of you after you are called home, "My friend grew old gracefully."

We feel hurt, perhaps, the first time we hear some one calling us old; not so much because of the fact that we are old, as because of the surprise to us who had not thought of it. When the heart is young, we do not realize how plainly the marks of age are seen by others. But what does

it matter whether we are old or young, if we are walking in the light of Christ's favor, in the bright and shining light of his countenance to whom a thousand years are as one day! Blessed hour when the summons comes to leave this world. Blessed, blessed hour! God grant that you, my friend, and I, and all of us may bravely and trustfully take the last step away from the sin and pain and weariness of this world into the fullness of the glory awaiting every one who is redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

It is true that it is not altogether pleasant to be old and past usefulness, to be set in the chimney-corner, or tucked away in a room by ourselves, while others perform the duties which were once our delight; but, dear heart, we are never past usefulness. By your patience and sweetness you may still do good. By your firm and unwavering trust in God you may lead others to trust in him. By your kindly spoken words you may influence others to speak kindly. To the last breath you may be useful, and put hands of love and helpfulness underneath some weak or erring one, and lift him into the strength of God. Just to sit quietly in your chair with a smile for every one is much, very much to do for God and good.

So long as life lasts, an influence is going out from us for good or evil; and even after we are dead, the peaceful calm upon our faces may speak to the living of a saintly life and a triumphant

death; and the good or evil we have done will surely live after us, bearing fruit in ever increasing measure.

It is said that the young look forward, and the old look backward. In the years that are gone there has been an intermingling of the bitter and the sweet. Many remembrances bring tears to the eyes and pain to the heart; but there is reason for rejoicing while reviewing the bright side; the good deeds; the life of daily self-abnegation for those we loved; the innumerable charities of words or deeds; the home where love reigned; the life of the Crucified One, which is, in some measure at least, the life of all who love him.

Remember that the hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness. A crown of glory! How much more precious in the sight of God and the angels than the priceless diadems of Kings and Queens! Oh, how blessed! As we approach nearer, ever nearer to the rest that remaineth to the people of God, we may wear a crown of glory!

Blessed saints who are thus glorified and awaiting the divine call, "Come up hither!" Blessed saints, all your sins washed away, clad in Christ's righteousness, peace be unto you! May the gates of heaven open wide for you, and hosts of angels and beloved ones greet you with loud hosannas to the Lamb that was slain that you might be redeemed, and wear a crown of glory throughout the eternal ages!

XVIII

FAR FROM HOME

Far, far away from home, out in the bitter cold and storms of life are you who never tell the story of the birth of Bethlehem's Holy Child to your own babes. The Christmas bells and Easter chimes fall on your ears with no response of joy within your heart. You heed no story of the Son of God Incarnate, The Wonderful, The Counselor, The Prince of Peace. The light of all the world shines not for you.

Out in the bitter cold, you do not know the warmth within the palace of the Everlasting King. You never at the banquet rare within his courts have sat as guest. You, in the bitter storm of life, are buffeted and tossed about without a guide, and you will, soon or late, be dashed upon the hidden rocks, and wounded, bruised, cry out in vain to all the false lights set along the shore. In vain you'll shout aloud to all the phantoms and delusions you have followed from your youth till now.

You're very far from home, for you reject the Holy One and love him not. Sharp thorns you pluck to pierce anew his brow aglow with love, with heavenly patience and with grace most rare. Ofttimes you're sick and faint at heart, and

weary of the long and toilsome way. You gladly would give up the useless strife, the reaching after something just beyond in vain, or if obtained, too late for help or comfort; for the house you've built, the fame you've gained, the gold, all lose their fancied worth when once they're yours. E'en love is bitter-sweet, not always kind, and all your joys are followed fast by dreary shadows which appall the heart.

A light shines from the windows of a palace warm and bright, wherein Love sits and waits for you to come, calling in tender tones, "Come home, thou tempest-tossed and weary one, come home!" Will you not run to him, with feet made fleet by love, and look into his face, and sit beside him as his guest, and learn to walk with him through all the thorny path that leads to heaven? And walking thus with him, your face will shine with love, and round your head a halo bright will rest, and bright and brighter grow unto that perfect day when you shall see him on the heavenly throne, the King of kings.

Within your hand you hold a rose of beauty rare and fragrance sweet. God gave minutest care to this fair flower, which blooms perhaps but once a year, and lives but a few days. You love, admire, caress as if it were a thing of life this rose so heavenly beautiful. Of beauty marvelous are all the flowers with which the earth is brightened everywhere, in forests wild, on mountain height, in lonely glen,—the smiles of Nature, showing gladness in her own sweet life. God

cares for all these lovely flowers, and clothes them all in garments far more beautiful than those of Solomon, arrayed in kingly robes. Will he not care for you much more than for all these?

Even Nature's precious things are torn and rent and beaten to the earth by storms, and pass away as do our joys. Nothing endures. The earth itself will pass away; and creatures born again into the image of the Living God, into the beauty of our King, we shall forget our troubles here, our tears, in all the holy beauty of the Land of Love. 'Tis only for a few short years that beauty and deformity, that sunshine, shadow, sweet and bitter, fierce and raging storms must fill our days; then storm and shadow, bitterness, deformity, will pass away, and sunshine, sweetness, beauty rare will take their place, and we shall dwell forever in the presence of our King. Then, and then alone, we'll know the reason for the buffeting and tossing to and fro here on the earth, and why the paths our Heavenly Father leads us in are often just the opposite we fain would choose ourselves.

If you could know just what it is to live forevermore! If you could only realize that this short life is only a beginning of eternity! Still in your infancy, you need the cradle of Christ's love in which to rock yourself to quietness and peace. You only know the alphabet, and stammer in your speech, and sigh, and cry, and long for rest and home! Beyond this life what heights of knowledge we shall reach, what wondrous lan-

guage we shall speak, and sigh and cry no more, but rest in peace in our loved home. Then we shall see our Jesus face to face, and walk and talk with him through all the eternal years.

You cannot feel the Savior's love surrounding you? You cannot think he died for you? Why did he leave his Father's home on high to work and suffer, to be scorned and beaten, spit upon and cursed, at last to die a cruel death upon the cross, if love to you, to me, to all the human race did not his heart to pity move, and make him wish to lift us up to his high heaven to dwell with him through all eternity? Can you reject the offer of such love from him, the Highest One? Will you still stay away from home and love divine? Oh, be not so unwise! Answer his loving call, "Come unto me!" And go to him, and falling at his feet let his dear hands upon you rest in blessing and forgiveness too; and he will bid you rise, and call you his beloved, and he will care for you through all the years of this sad life, and through all other life beyond this world. Sin-stained, and sick, and blind though you may be, stay not away. He came to call the sinners, not the righteous ones, to follow him. He will forgive and heal you, make you see, and he will wash you in his blood and make you pure, and you will wear his white robes and be glad.

Come, weary ones, come home, come home! Come one and all and drink of life the waters pure and free, for all who will may come!

XIX

THE GOOD FIGHT

Life is a continual fight. Even the little child must be taught to fight selfishness, covetousness, untruthfulness, quick temper, and all other sins in the unregenerate heart. Evil sits over against the good in our lives, and there must be strife for the mastery. Outside ourselves, the battlefield is broad, the enemy powerful, and we may well shrink from an encounter. We may love peace, and hate strife, but we cannot refuse to enter the lists when challenged, without dishonor. Indeed, there can be no refusal, for the invisible power which controls our destiny, compels us to take up the gauntlet, or yield ourselves vanquished. We must, at least, defend ourselves against our enemies who are aggressive and powerful, and ever on the watch to gain a victory over us.

Our most troublesome foes are those that try to gain entrance into our hearts; and we need to set a watch, day and night, on the outposts of our citadel, lest they creep in while we are inattentive, or while we are sleeping. Evil is on every hand, and we must either overcome it, or be overcome by it; and no victory is final unless good follows so

closely in the steps of the retreating evil, that the evil cannot retrace its steps. Where good is, evil cannot abide. Where God reigns supreme, the devil (the do-evil) flees away.

We are created not for our own ease and pleasure, but for strife, for resistance, for aggressive warfare against all forms of evil; and in the home, in society, on the street, or on the Exchange, our touch may be like the Divine One, casting out evil and substituting good by loving helpfulness, if only by a word, a look, a smile, or a warning.

If we make self the center around which all things circle, if we take and never give, if we shut our eyes to the progress of evil and make no advance into the enemy's territory, if we do not try to overcome the evil by tongue or pen, or by active personal effort, what excuse can we make for neglected opportunities? Shown by the search-light cast upon it from God's throne, how will such a life appear?

The power of the Almighty God is the only power of avail in the hand-to-hand combat with evil. His armor is the only protection against the darts of the enemy. Then put on the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the sandals of peace, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit—the whole armor of God. Thus protected, you will go forth to battle, and return in triumph to lay your laurels at the feet of Jesus, your great Captain, through whose

strength and in whose name you have overcome. Then will he clothe you in white raiment, and he will feed you with hidden manna, and with fruit from the tree of life. He will give you power over nations, and make of you a pillar in his Father's temple. Then God will be your God, and you will be his son and inherit all things! Wonderful to contemplate, and how much more wonderful to realize! Thus is evil in our hearts overcome by good, by the entering in of righteousness and peace!

There are those who say that evil exists only in the imagination; that there is no such thing as sin or disease, and that even death itself may be overcome by a mental process! How delightful it would be to overcome all the ills to which flesh and spirit are heirs, by elevated thoughts! If we could only believe that we are well when we are sick, that we have no pain when we are suffering tortures, that the thing in our hearts which men and God call sin is not there after all, we could take off our armor, and sit down in peace and quietness. To most, the pain and sin are too real to admit of such hallucinations, and we must deal with hard facts.

God does not ignore or condone evil. While he loves the sinner, he hates sin, and cannot look upon it with the least degree of allowance. He is on the side of right. He will not keep his anger forever. Retribution marches close upon the steps of the evildoer. "And behold, at eventide

trouble, and before the morning he is not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us." Could you look into the mysteries and behold the secret embassies sent from the high heavens to aid you, with what strength and courage you would go to the very front of the battle! In the old times, the victory was not to the strong, nor to the greater numbers, but to those who trusted in Jehovah while obeying his commands.

In combating vice, something good must drive out the evil. Find a tender spot in the heart of the bad man, or the bad woman; the hidden, obscured, apparently extinguished spark of goodness. Fan it into life by kindness, by genuine interest, by the pitying love like that which Jesus bestows upon even the chief of sinners. Forget your clean hands and unsoiled garments, and fear not to touch the unclean with tender pity and brotherly love. Fear not. Your Lord has walked in the same path. Follow him. Through his life of suffering and good deeds, through his patient forgiveness and uplifting of the chief of sinners, into the garden of Gethsemane, even unto death, let us follow, follow, whither he leads! Here the cross, but there the crown! Here the fierce combat, there the victory, with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

In reviewing our lives we remember many battles, some with joy, and others with sorrow unspeakable. When we were victorious, we had

reason for rejoicing; when we were defeated, what but humiliation and remorse could follow our defeat?

One evening a man was invited by a friend to go to a prayer-meeting, and by another to go to a gambling house. After a few qualms of conscience, he chose the latter. He won hundreds of dollars from his opponent, who had staked his all. Conscience said to him, "Give it back! Give it back! It is not yours. You have given nothing in return for it. You have not earned it legitimately. Give it back!" The devil whispered, "Keep it! Keep it! You won it honestly. By the rules of the game, it is yours. Keep it!" The man made but a weak fight, and the devil won! The loss of all he had drove his opponent to the drink, and sent him headlong to destruction. Oh, what remorse in reviewing such a battle-field.

Another man, in reviewing his life, may say, "On that battle-field I had a hard fight with the jug. I filled it with the choicest liquor, carried it out into the field back of my house, and set it upon a rock. Then I said to it, 'You or I must conquer, once for all!' I was almost maddened with thirst for the accursed thing, and I ran to it again and again, and caught it to my breast as a loved friend. Then I took out the cork and smelled it; then put it down, crying out in agony, 'Oh, God! Now, or never!' I threw myself on the ground, and, in my desperation, tore up the earth with my

hands. Then I prayed as never before, 'Help, Lord! Help, Lord! Oh, Lord, do help, I beseech thee! Just this once, come to me, Lord! Do come!' And he came, glory be to his name, and put his arms around me, and lifted me from the ground, and together, hand in hand, and step with step, we went to the old jug, and lifting it, smashed it on the rock, shouting 'Victory! Victory!' while we watched the vile stuff, the accursed stuff, flow around our feet. Then I kneeled and gave myself, soul and body, to the Lord. He put his hands upon my head and blessed me; then taking my hands in his, he lifted me and pressed me to his great heart of love. So the compact was sealed; and never once since that hour have I had any desire for intoxicating drinks, or for any other evil thing." This was a famous victory, won by the Captain of our Salvation, who ever stands ready to help all who call upon him in their weakness and distress. In the story of this man, tempted beyond what he was able to bear alone, we have the story of many a poor drunkard who has been saved at the Savior's feet.

Another man was tempted, through envy or jealousy, to steal a good name. The devil said, "Do it! Do it! That man thinks too much of himself. He is so pious! Lower his self-respect! Take down his pride! Smirch his good name! Set the ball rolling, and fifty others will give it a kick, to keep it rolling with ever increasing impetus, and when it strikes him, where will be your

fine Christian and highly esteemed citizen?" The still small voice said, "Do it not! He is a good man." But envy and jealousy are the devil's allies. "Get thou behind me, Satan," if said at all, it was in so feeble a voice that Satan pretended not to hear, and an innocent man was ruined; his good name was stolen. This thief sold himself more and more to the devil, until "Lost, lost, forever lost!" were his last words before stepping out into the great unknown! "Defeated, defeated with a loss great and terrible, even the loss of the soul itself—" must be written on his battle field!

"In 1875, Mr. Moody was preaching in St. Louis, and the *Globe-Democrat* was reporting his sermons. Valentine Burke had served twenty years or more in prison, and was a hard case to deal with. One day some one threw a *Globe-Democrat* into his cell, and the first thing that caught his eye was this big headline: 'How the Jailer at Philippi Got Caught.' It was just what Burke wanted, and he sat down with a chuckle to read the story of the jailer's discomfiture.

" 'Philippi,' he said; 'that's way up in Illinois. I've been in that town.' Then he began to read. 'What rot is this?' he asked. ' "Paul and Silas—A great earthquake; what must I do to be saved?" Has the *Globe-Democrat* got to printing such stuff?' Burke threw it down with an oath, and walked about his cell like a caged lion. By and by he took up the paper and read its strange story. It was then that something, from whence he did not know, came

into the burglar's heart, and cut it to the quick. Again and again, he read the sermon through. 'What does it all mean?' he began asking. 'Twenty years and more I have been burglar and jailbird, but I never felt like this. What is it to be saved, anyway? I've lived a dog's life, and I'm getting tired of it. If there is such a God as that preacher tells about, I believe I'll find it out, if it kills me to do it.'

"He found it out, by the grace of God. Away towards midnight, after hours of bitter remorse over his wasted life, after a hard fight with the devil, and lonely and broken prayers, he learned that there is a God who is able and willing to blot out the darkest and bloodiest record at a single stroke. Then he waited for day, laughing and crying by turns. Next morning, when the guard came around, Burke had a pleasant word for him. When the sheriff came, Burke greeted him as a friend, and told him how he had found God after reading Moody's sermon.

" 'Jim,' said the sheriff to the guard, 'you better keep an eye on Burke. He's playing the pious dodge, and the first chance he gets he'll be out of here.' In a few weeks Burke came to trial, but in this instance the case failed, and he was released. Friendless, an ex-burglar in a big city, known as a daring criminal, he had a hard time for months of shame and sorrow. But he was as brave a Christian as he had been a burglar, and he struggled on. Seeing that his sin-blurred features were against him, he asked the Lord if he wouldn't make him a better looking man, so that he could get an honest job.

"A year from that time Mr. Moody met him in Chicago, and said he was as fine looking a man as

he knew. Afterward the St. Louis sheriff made him his deputy, and several years later, when Mr. Moody was passing through that city, he stopped off for an hour to see Burke. He found him in a room in the court-house, serving as trusted guard over \$60,000 worth of diamonds.

“ ‘Mr. Moody,’ he said, ‘see what the grace of God can do for a burglar! Look at this! The sheriff picked me out of his force to guard it!’ Then he cried like a child, as he held up the glittering gems for Mr. Moody to see.

“Many were converted through Burke, and when he died the rich and the poor, the good and the bad attended his funeral in great numbers; and the big men of the city could not say enough over the coffin of Valentine Burke.”

He had fought a great and good fight, and had laid hold on eternal life. Not all battles are of the same nature as that of the gambler, the drunkard, the slanderer, or the burglar; but all are of great importance, and victory should crown each one. There is the hand-to-hand fight with poverty, with misfortune, with affliction, with things too numerous to mention. In all battles, be they great or small, we may be more than conquerors through him that loved us and gave himself for us.

It is great and glorious to fight for our country, to protect our flag, to keep inviolate the liberty for which our forefathers suffered and died. It is braver and far more glorious to be a soldier

in the army of the Lord, to follow our Great Captain through fire and through flood, holding on high the banner of the cross dyed with his heart's blood. In his army are men, women and children. None is too old for service in this army; none is too young, and no one is exempt. The young and the old, the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, the hale and hearty, the sick and feeble, the halt, the lame and the blind may enter this army. Once within its ranks, once loyal soldiers of the cross, what a transformation takes place! The old become young, the poor become rich, the weak are made strong; the halt and the lame leap for joy, the lepers are cleansed, and in a goodly company with songs and shouts of victory they march on together, to lend a hand, to right wrongs, to uplift the fallen, to give a cup of cold water, to tell the old, old story, to lay hold on eternal life.

Where are you fighting, my friend? In Satan's army, or in the army of the Lord? If you are in the army of Satan, right about face and join the army of the Lord! Then forward march to victory! "You may step in anywhere, for there's fighting all along the line." Are you one of the feeble ones and afraid? Then flee to the Lord who will hide you away from your enemies, in his secret place. But be not afraid! In his name and in his strength we may go on from victory to victory until the last enemy is conquered, and we kneel at his feet to receive our crown!

Then no more awful struggles with temptation and sin, no more defeats, but glory and blessedness beyond the heart of man to conceive, forever, and ever, and ever!

XX

WOMAN'S HIGH ESTATE

Far away in the Adirondacks a spring bubbles out of the ground, forming a clear pool in which may be seen the reflection of the trees and the ferns nodding to it cheerily. It catches the glints of sunshine streaming through the foliage, and a sight of the blue sky and fleecy clouds which it mirrors in its clear surface, a bit of heaven embracing the earth. Out from this pool flows a brook which goes rapidly over rocks and steeps, here and there joined by other mountain brooks, and fed by winter snows, until it becomes a large stream. Winding between mountains, through peaceful valleys, by highland and lowland, by huge palisades hewn out by nature's quarryman, a broad, beautiful river, at last, it reaches the sea.

Like the spring, the brook, the river, is woman's influence. It begins in a gentle way, in the home, in the heart of a child, in the life of a man, and it goes on widening, like the river to the sea. Through this influence, in a greater or less degree, she moves the arms which move the world. Of her, statesmen and kings are born; by her heroes are reared, and nations founded. When

her voice is lifted, the nations listen. When her hand is extended, all good works prosper. Suffering is relieved, and death averted, by her wise and soothing ministrations. The sick soldier turns his weary head to watch her, and calls her "Mother!" The little child clings to her gown, and follows her in perfect, loving confidence. About two thousand years ago, a woman was the mother of our Lord. He chose to be the son of Mary, at the same time that he was the Son of God, and so hallowed maternity through all time.

Often woman's influence is like the silent dew, or the gently falling rain, or the subtle fragrance of the rose; but sometimes like the rushing wind which carries everything before it. Give her all the opportunity she desires, and step by step, following the lead of the Divine Master, she will become one of the strongest powers the world has ever known. She is brave and energetic, and the very embodiment of that love which gives the life for the friend.

Life for the friend

Is what her love is giving every day;
True love, the love which measured cannot be.
If work be hard, love, love can do it; love
Can bear it; love is kind! Love will make fleet
Her hands to work, her feet to run the race;
For love endureth all things, love is strong!
What will not woman do or dare for love?

It is this attribute of love in the heart of

woman which will accomplish great things. First, love to God, then love in the home, then love to all humanity, especially to her own sex. What may not woman do when she is in earnest, and walking in his steps who died that all might live? "Who delighted to do God's will; who did not exclude pleasure, or delight in pain, but who did not think about pleasing himself at all." Like him, a true woman forgets self in her home, forgets self in society, in the church, and in all the work to which she has been called.

Are all women living in this manner? Alas! by no means! We need but to read of the doings of "society" in the daily papers to learn that there are many women who waste their time and strength in absolute folly. Whole pages with illustrations are given to "Society's Rag Doll Time!" and similar foolishness of men and women of wealth and social position in their ridiculous efforts to pass away time. I quote from a New York paper.

"All Newport was convulsed by the highly original conceit of several society leaders carrying a stuffed baby down Bellevue Avenue, and disporting with it on Bailey's Beach. It was conceded that nothing so brilliant, so unutterably funny had occurred in many moons. Men and women of wealth, and place, and power, gathered about the rag baby, and caressed it. It was the one touch of nature that spoke to all hearts. They were simply, kindly, genuinely happy. They were as little children."

I forbear to mention the names of these men and women who would not be seen carrying real babies, for the world, but who would pet a rag doll, and be "genuinely happy!"

The true woman sits not down with hands folded, wondering what she shall do to pass away the time. She is up and doing. She does not think of what she may do to please herself, but of what she may do to please others. She does not avoid the responsibilities of wifehood and motherhood to play with rag dolls, but regards herself as exalted to the highest honor and privilege in being permitted to fulfill these responsibilities. She acknowledges no social superiority but that of character. She says of herself, "I am what I am, and not a creature of circumstance. If I, in myself, am worthy of respect and honor, no added thing which is not myself can make me more worthy, and nothing can be taken away from me but outward appurtenances, which are entirely outside of my real self. My face, my manners, my voice, will be the expression of my inner life, and I must keep myself high, and pure, and noble, for no one can be near me without receiving a part of what I am. I am no longer my own. The seal of the covenant is set upon my heart. I am strong in Christ. I fear not to undertake difficult things. With the banner of love unfolded to the breeze, I am marching on to victory!"

For what was woman made? To follow her

own way, for ease, for selfishness, to pass away the time with as little ennui as possible, for idleness, for pleasure, for freedom from every ill and unpleasantness? Ah, no! For love; for tenderness; for helpfulness. To do with all her might, whatever of good her hand finds to do. To bear and endure sweetly and patiently the inevitable ills of life. To be a strong tower in time of need upon which father, brother, husband, sons and daughters may lean. To be the strong arm which helps to wield the power which moves the world towards righteousness and truth.

What will you do? What will you contribute, not only to the good of your immediate home circle, and of those with whom you come in frequent contact, but to the honest and honorable life of your city, your town, your State, your Nation? Rise up in the strength and grace with which God has endowed you, and do your part. Renounce all foolish, senseless living. Take up your nearest duty, as your nearest privilege, and make the earth glad, and the heavens rejoice that God created so wonderful and beautiful a being as woman!

However beautiful and wonderful she may be, woman's work must be done; sewing and mending, sweeping and dusting; food must be cooked, dishes washed, and floors scrubbed. There is no end to the work she must perform in her own home, or in the service of others; and outside the home, behind the counter, in the office, so

much to be done, so many livings to earn, such a struggle to exist! Work, work, endless work, often with small remuneration, little satisfaction.

Many women look no higher than their work. They have no dissatisfaction with their lot, no aspiration for anything better. They are work-a-day women, and are content to do the same thing day after day, to the end of time. There are others to whom this daily toil is irksome. They perform it because they must. They would gladly escape from it if they could.

Let us try to look at this subject from a standpoint outside ourselves. Let us try to see clearly, without prejudice just what it all means. The servant is not greater than his master, and we are not greater than our Lord. Surely, if any one should have been exempt from the care and work of this world, it should have been our Lord. If for any one a life adapted to his natural aspirations and capabilities, there should have been for him a life of glory and honor. But by his own experience he knows how tired and discouraged workers often are; that their burdens seem too great to bear; that work and pain often go together; and so with outstretched arms which were frequently tired, from his great heart of love which often ached, he stands and cries in tones that will not cease to be heard throughout the ages, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!" He gives us rest while we work, by his presence, by the

touch of his hand, by his imparted strength and patience, by the light of love from his glorified countenance, by his own promised peace. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you!"

Thus helped by our Lord, we may give to the work in hand our best efforts, doing it so patiently and so well that others may be helped by our example. We may perform our tasks as our Lord in our place would perform them, with no anxiety, for does he not walk with us all the way? With no dissatisfaction, for we are doing the will of the Omnipotent, and what matter, if the work be not to our mind? No work is menial done in love's name. Pride says the contrary. Our neighbors look down upon us if we work and they do not; and it often happens that we do not ask what our Lord thinks of such and such things, but what our neighbors think!

We are bought with a price, even the blood of Jesus; therefore must we serve him as those who serve him day and night in his temple; not as slaves compelled to obey, but with loving and willing service; for are we not his dear children? Are we not heirs to a wonderful inheritance which can never fade away?

Never complain if you have no heavy load of care, no distracting anxiety, no breaking heart. To be obliged to work, well, what of it? Sing and shout for joy that you are able to work; that no sick bed holds you, that no darkened room shuts you in from the light of the sun and the

starry heavens! God wants no foolish complaining going up to his throne. He loves a happy worker.

Do not be afraid of the kitchen. There is no sensible man who will not be happier and more comfortable to have his wife attend to everything, even though she may be able to keep servants; and if she sometimes make the bread and the coffee, it is all the sweeter to him. A natural woman likes to be efficient, industrious and domestic. She does not allow her neighbors to dictate as to what she may do or not do in her own home, and still retain her womanly dignity. The false idea that a woman cannot do any kind of work, not even in her own home, without lowering herself to the position of a menial, causes much discomfort and unhappiness. Away with such nonsense! Be true women! Keep your muscles strong, and your minds sound, through much useful exercise, that you may be prepared for helpfulness in the time of great need, which may come at any hour.

If you do train Bridget, and Susan and John so perfectly that everything goes like clock-work without even your supervision, the time may come when you will be for days without John, or Bridget or Susan; and unless you have the tact and the knowledge necessary to help fill the gap, the whole household will be thrown into confusion; housekeeping will be declared unendurable; the remaining servants will be overworked, and ill-

humored, and things go on badly, because you think it would be a disgrace to be seen with broom or duster in hand even in your own household! A woman cannot be strong without exercise. She cannot be graceful and attractive without strength. Why not combine the useful and the beautiful in your life, as do the works of nature? Cannot you fulfill your God-given mission as perfectly as an inanimate tree? Work is not incompatible with the highest refinement. You may grow in loveliness and intelligence, and at the same time make yourself indispensable to your household by actual service.

How much more honorable to spend your life in putting forth effort to some good purpose than to idly fold your hands to enjoy comforts provided by the hard work of some one else. Be efficient and helpful. Learn how to adjust things when they are out of joint, and how to cover and smooth over things which will go wrong sometimes, notwithstanding all your care. Make light of annoyances and mishaps, and never lose your self-control. It is a grand thing to be a noble woman. You cannot be noble without being symmetrically developed. Put forth your powers in every direction, to that end. You do not know what influence you may have in your home and outside your home by the purity and dignity of your life, and the quiet leading of true love. If you do your own work in the home, unless you use great care, your hands and nails are spoiled;

but your heart is not spoiled, neither does it lose one particle of its beauty. You need not degenerate into a lifeless drudge. You may keep young and strong and loving, and make of your home a heaven on this dull earth, so desolate but for woman's love and self-sacrifice.

“That's what a wife is for,” to cook his meat,
To sweep the house, to bruise the knuckles, soil
The hands with work, “those pretty little hands
That ne'er should bear the marks of homely toil!”
It is not that he does not care for her
As when at first he held her hand in his
And said those foolish words! It is because
He did not know or think what need might be
Of having wife for helpmate, not for show,
To sit with folded hands and dream of love,
To sing, to dance, to have her own sweet will
Through all the day. He half is right and half
Is wrong, when to her mild complaint replies
“That's what a wife is for!” If willingly
She worketh with her hands in wool and flax,
As good wives did in days of Solomon,
If nearest duty, whatsoe'er it be,
Be nearest pleasure too, if her sweet love
Be strong and sensible as well as sweet,
If no false pride control her daily life,
She, too, may say without too much regret,
“That's what a wife is for, to cook his meat,
To sweep and dust, and make all clean and neat,
To smile, and kiss away his weariness,
To keep the children quiet for his sake,
To live and love, and love and live, each day,

148 HERE AND THERE A LEAF

A woman's life of sacrifice and pain,
Upheld by love which liketh is to God,
Transformed into the likeness of his Son
By work and sacrifice, by love and pain!"

XXI

TIRED MOTHERS

It is a great joy and honor to be a mother. None knows the wonderful, heavenly ecstasy which enters her heart when her babe is placed in her bosom, nor the depth of the love and tenderness awakened at the birth of every child, but the mother. It is an experience which she cannot afford to miss, that of bearing and rearing children. Even when death comes to take away the most beautiful one, that too opens a path in which it is good to walk, though it be in anguish of spirit; for it is better to have children and lose them than not to have them at all. The discipline is refining, and to have children in heaven a never-ending joy. But they bring with them toil and trouble, anxious days and sleepless nights, and great trials of patience and physical endurance. They throw chains around you which it is impossible to break. You are no longer free. Your time is not your own. It belongs to them. From the first moment when their strange little voices are heard, they are tyrants, and you are a slave. How to bear the fetters lightly so that they will not oppress you, is a lesson well worth learning; for when the family

increases rapidly, and there are two or three hardly past babyhood, how tired the mothers are. How often they feel disheartened, and hardly know which way to turn with the multiplicity of cares devolving upon them. This is the situation of every true mother, no matter how many nurses and servants she may have; and how is it when there are no nurses and no servants? Tired mothers indeed. The world must be full of them.

There is no end to the buttons to be sewed on, the stockings to be darned, the rents to be mended. There is sweeping and cleaning, a life-long battle with dust, cobwebs and flies. It requires a great effort to decently exist; to keep your home, your children and yourself in order. The three meals follow each other in quick succession, then it is soon bedtime, and each succeeding day is like the others. How many women there are into whose lives come little but this weary round of wearisome duties, with no time to enjoy the house in order, or the clean children, or a quiet evening.

It may be, in part, your own fault if life becomes to you thus full of care and labor. You may be inefficient, or too neat, or too great a caretaker. But often it seems inevitable. Is it possible, then, for you to be anything but a living automaton? How can you avoid it? How can you rise above circumstances which require your whole strength of mind and body to compass?

In the first place, do not overtax yourself. It is better to leave some things undone than to get so weary that a night of sound sleep will not refresh you. Do not allow yourself to be tied up with cobwebs and buried with dust beyond resurrection. If the house be not always in perfect order, no one need be distressed about it. If your children are not always clean and tidy, it will not hinder their growing up to be good. Do the best you can toward the accomplishment of your daily duties, and when you have used the strength given you for the day, stop. You have done all that is required of you, and more, for a little strength and brightness should be reserved for the evening hours when your husband and children have leisure to enjoy your presence and helpful sympathy.

Do not try to conceal from your husband that you have genuine work to do each day. Husbands know little of household matters, although they are apt to think that they know all about them. Do not hesitate to initiate him into their mysteries. It will make him more helpful and sympathetic to know your exact position and your difficulties, and he will be more ready to excuse some things which you are unable to do even to your own satisfaction.

Try to find something to interest and occupy your mind while your hands are busy. If you live in the country, in summer take all the work you can to the piazza, or under a tree, and let

the baby play about you. He will be less trouble out of doors, and the sunshine and fresh air will be of inestimable benefit to you both. There is a fine view near your house. Enjoy it for ten minutes each day. You will work the faster for the pleasant interruption. While you are busy with indoor work, the sun comes streaming into your room making beautiful pictures of shimmering leaves and drooping vines upon the walls. And this is God's message to you, "Cheer up!" How bright it is. What a beautiful message of love it is to you from God! Will you heed it, and work for the rest of the day with more hope, with lighter heart and brighter face? The little birds work and sing. Have you not a song in your heart also, and does it not sometimes break forth into words? Sing while you work. It will make the work lighter.

Open your eyes to the beauty around you. If you live near the woods, enjoy them. Even the sight of them is refreshing, and an occasional ramble in them will teach you how Nature everywhere is struggling to assert herself and do her utmost to utilize every particle of dust, every drop of dew and every stray sunbeam to make herself useful and beautiful. Even the hard and barren rocks are covered with mosses and lichens which you will find to be wonderful miniature forests, if you look at them through a microscope.

Are there mountains near your home? Then,

indeed, you are fortunate, for nothing in nature can be more restful or joy-giving than the sight of mountains standing strong and silent against the sky, with sunset glory gilding them, or clouds kissing their brows, catching the first greeting of the morning sun, or made entrancing by the soft light of the moon. They have mysterious caverns and recesses where the shadows always lie, and ravines through which the mountain streams roar and tumble in beauty unseen. They are made green and beautiful by spring's soft color, or clothed in the splendor of autumn's gold and vermilion, or majestic with the snow-covered pines and bare-branched trees covered with ice and sparkling in the sunshine.

If you live near a river or the ocean, you have a constant variety of scenery, for neither mountains, rivers nor oceans are less variable in their moods than we are, and even in dull, cheerless days you may see in them that which you may admire, and in which you may find sympathy. If you are denied social pleasures, you may find much compensation in being surrounded by the pure, unselfish works of Nature, which give much and exact little, and which never disappoint you. Though you may have none of these things, there are other resources for rest and pleasure at your command. Look carefully into your life and surroundings and see if there be not some source of joy and gratitude which you have hitherto overlooked. The source of the spring is not always

apparent, and we may regard as only a common watercourse or a pool of muddy water that which, after the debris and dirt are cleared away, may prove to be a never-failing supply of pure water; and there are some springs which lie deep under the surface. There are many springs of comfort in your life, if you will find them.

You ought not to be so tired. God does not intend that each day's burden should be heavier than you can easily bear. He gives help and strength for each day's needs. You can be happy to-day, can you not? Or if this is one of the dark days, you can be patient and brave? Well, that is enough. To-morrow will bring its own strength and resources. You need not now take up to-morrow. God does not work miracles in our behalf, but he has arranged everything so that much help and comfort will come to us every day in easy, natural ways; and it is wrong for us not to accept what he gives and turn it to best account. Trees, flowers, grass, birds, sunshine, bright clouds and the wonderful blue sky ought to be to us a continual delight; the love of husband and children a never-failing source of joy and gratitude; the Bible a city of refuge.

There is a bright side to everything, no matter how dark the other side may be. We are never so badly off but that we might be worse off. Somebody looks upon us as fortunate. Much unhappiness comes from envying those whom we consider in better circumstances than ourselves, and

trying to reach their standard. How senseless, when none is so high but that somebody is higher, until you reach the highest, who are seldom happy. Be content. God rules. He can place you higher if he choose. Look upon your position and all that you have as God-given, and do not overlook any of his gifts, nor dishonor him by believing that he has bestowed upon you the thorns, and upon some one else the roses. Sweet and bitter, roses and thorns for all, God-given!

In many instances when the care of your own family becomes a hardship, it is self-imposed. You are in the dull routine because you do not try to get out of it. You are overworked because you improve no opportunity to play. You are nervous because you shut yourself up too much in the house, keep your rooms too warm and poorly ventilated. You wait on your children when they should be early taught to help you and each other. You fret too much if Johnny's clothes are torn or soiled, or if he shows no love for cleanliness, and you are forced to urge him to wash his hands and face, and brush his hair. You allow many trivial things to annoy you, when nothing less than an earthquake or an avalanche should move a mother. What if the baby does fall off the bed and bump his head? Babies are always bumping their heads. What if Charlie tell a falsehood? It is by no means a sure sign that he will grow up a liar. Children are not born perfect,

and there is no end to their little mishaps and childish failings.

Mothers would be less tired if they were more sensible. Think of the time worse than wasted in the preparation of food without which every member of the family would be better; of the unnecessary time spent upon the children's clothes in making tucks and frills and a hundred and one other needless things; of the many hours spent for mere show, or to do as others do, which add to no one's happiness or comfort. No matter if you do differently from every one else in the world, if you do right and make your home a true home. Live for comfort, and the good you can do. Dress your children plainly, that you and they need not be fretted about their clothes. Furnish your house simply and comfortably, and have nothing that you must shut up in a dark room.

There are mothers who are tired because they have no clothing to mend, no stockings to darn, and who would give worlds for just such a pile of mending as that to which you sit down with a feeling of discontent; for disorder in the house, for the tracks of muddy shoes on the floor, or prints of little fingers on the window-pane. Think of this, and imagine if you can what your life would be if you had none of these things; if the patience-trying little ones were all silent forever, and there were no noise in the house; and put love and cheerfulness into all you do for them; thus will the dullest work receive a bright-

ness. Thus will the mother-love shed a halo of light around the homeliest duties.

Be careful not to become tired with imaginary troubles, lest God say of you, "There is my dear child to whom I have given many blessings. She does not appreciate them. She is continually clamoring for more, continually dissatisfied, and will not enjoy her husband, her children, her health, her lovely home. She has no real troubles, but she thinks her lot, which thousands might well envy, a hard one, and is ungrateful and selfish. I cannot allow this. She is not making ready for heaven. Her soul is not growing, but is becoming dwarfed instead. She is blind, and nothing will open her eyes but real trouble. Much as it grieves me to do it, I must take away some thing which she already has, instead of giving her more."

Oh, cannot you open your eyes to see what God is doing for you without chastisement being needful? Cannot you be gratefully happy and rest in his love? Oh, mothers, cannot you feel his love surrounding you, smoothing your path, warding off dangers, giving you peace and quiet in your daily pursuits? Cannot you see the great glory of God in everything around you? The trees whisper it, the winds carry the message on swift wings, the sun mirrors it and sends it in one great flash of light and splendor all over the earth. The boundless blue sky in silence glorifies him; and will you not glorify him by your life?

Are you so tired and so much absorbed in sordid cares that you cannot teach your sons and daughters to avoid the selfishness, the worldliness, the wickedness everywhere to be seen in the outside world? Do you so shut out all the beauty and all the glory from your life that the lessons they learn from you are only unblessed work and unhallowed care? Open the windows of your soul and let in the glory of earth and sky; let in God's love, and God's strength. Then there will be a soft, glad light reflected from you on all the household, and joy and beauty will go hand in hand with work and care, and God will be glorified even in the most uninteresting bits of labor, and you will be weary only to rest again, to rest in him who toiled patiently and sweetly to do his Father's will.

If there be days when it seems impossible to accomplish anything, when physical energy is wanting, and you weary yourself with vain efforts to overcome your inefficiency, be quiet and patient with yourself, as you would be with the lame or blind, and do not try to do so much as on other days when the nerves are strong and the head clear. Do not make life too weighty a matter, or drag your feet in the mire when you should be walking lightly and cheerfully in the sunshine of God's love.

It is true that the cares of life often rise up like a cloud between us and God; but he is on one side of it, and we know he is there, and we are on

the other side, and he knows it, and there is but a thin, shadowy cloud between us which will be wholly dissipated by a few tears, or scattered to the four corners of the heavens by a single breath of God. And if we are not always in a religious mood, or in what is considered the active service of God, we need not grieve because our lives seem to have no high purpose. Who serves him more truly than a faithful mother, whether it be in tying baby's shoes patiently twenty times a day, or in teaching him "Our Father," on his knees with clasped hands by her side?

God places a higher value upon the little acts of every day than we do. Everything done to make the home neat and cheerful is precious in his sight; and we are serving him as truly in performing the work he daily gives us, as when we sing his praise or teach in his name, or pray on bended knee. All day long there may be going up to him the sweet incense of patient well-doing, and we may have, with all our cares, the spirit of love and praise.

If we could realize the sacredness and magnitude of our work, if the wonderful mother love could be always uppermost in our hearts, how it would lift us above our petty, wearing cares. How it would increase our tenderness and patience. If we could see in these troublesome, exacting boys and girls, angels of to-morrow, or next day, or next month, perhaps, with what sweetness and tender yearning would reproofs

be given; for many who are our troublesome children to-day, ere another year rolls round will be our angel boys and girls in heaven.

Do not let the hurry and worry of life drive Christ out of your heart. Let him into the privacy of home. There is where he is most needed. There is where he likes best to be, close by us, to comfort and to bless us, and to lift from us our burdens. He was often tired, so tired! The whole world is tired; but there will come a long day of rest. Happy will it be for us then if we are tired to some good purpose. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Here as well as in heaven, will he fulfill this promise. Precious rest in the bosom of Jesus, precious, indeed, the rest which comes to mind and body after work well done to his honor and glory, one smile of whom is worth more than the approbation of the whole world.

Then, we who are mothers need not be discouraged. The King of Heaven is on our side. However poor we may be, however humble our lot, we are queens, and home is our domain. God wishes us to serve him just where we are. The ways of serving him are as varied as the varied lives of thousands. We cannot all be missionaries. We cannot all be regular attendants at church, at the prayer-meeting, or at the benevolent society. The world may judge us by our outward religious life, by the frequency with which we are

seen in these places, but God looks at the heart, at the mind that is in us, at the patient, untiring love which makes sweet the home life.

Would we be so tired could we realize that when we cheerfully and lovingly perform our allotted tasks we are pleasing God? And if we are pleasing him, what higher life can there be on earth? To please the Omnipotent One, how wonderful the privilege! To be in harmony with his will each day, how delightful! No doubt we shall realize this blessedness fully in heaven, but cannot we realize it here on the earth? Without doubt we can appropriate to ourselves all the gracious promises of our God much more than we now do; and instead of living so much in the valley, we may live upon the mountain of our high privilege, in the very presence of God himself. Thousands of hungry, care-burdened and sin-burdened ones are crying out with great longings and tears, and reaching out after God. To all these waiting and weary ones the answer sweetly comes from millions of angelic voices around the heavenly throne joining with the Lamb in crying, "Whosoever will let him come!"

"A little elbow leans upon your knee,
Your tired knee that has so much to bear,
A child's dear eyes are looking lovingly
From underneath a thatch of tangled hair.
Perhaps you do not heed the velvet touch
Of warm, moist fingers folding yours so tight,

162 HERE AND THERE A LEAF

You do not prize the blessing overmuch,
You are almost too tired to pray to-night.

“But it is blessedness! A year ago
I did not see it as I do to-day,
We are so dull and thankless, and too slow
To catch the sunshine, till it slips away:
And now it seems surpassing strange to me
That, while I wore the badge of motherhood,
I did not kiss more oft and tenderly,
The little child that brought me only good.

“And if, some night when you sit down to rest,
You miss the elbow from your tired knee,
The restless, curly head from off your breast,
The lisping tongue that chattered constantly,
If, from your own, the dimpled hands had slipped,
And ne’er would nestle in your palm again,
If the white feet into the grave had tripped,
I could not blame you for your heart-ache then.

“I wonder so, that mothers ever fret
At little children clinging to their gown;
Or that the footprints, when the days are wet,
Are ever black enough to make them frown.
If I could find a little, muddy boot,
Or cap, or jacket, on my chamber floor,
If I could kiss a rosy, restless foot,
And hear its patter in my home once more—

“If I could mend a broken cart to-day,
To-morrow make a kite to reach the sky,
There is no woman in God’s world could say
She was more blissfully content than I.

But O! the dainty pillow next my own
Is never rumped by a shining head,
My singing birdling from its nest is flown,
The little boy I used to kiss is dead!"

XXII

DEAR BABY RALPH

Love-crowned, the royalty of motherhood
I bear. My scepter may I gently wield
With love and patience toward our first-born
child.
From out the heaven where souls are born has
come
This precious gift from God.

Of all the babes
Which ever came to bless an earthly home,
This babe most lovely is! No other one
Can ere with him compare. The light of heaven
No purer, brighter is, than that which shines
Within his lovely eyes! No angel's smile
Can be more heavenly sweet than this dear
child's!

I wonder if the mother of our Lord
Was ever weary, caring for her babe!
Or was she filled with rapture by the thought
That to the Savior of the world she gave
Her tender care, her mother-love, her life?
So filled with joy by this great mystery,
And by the unique honor thus bestowed

On her, above all women, that the cares
Of motherhood were lifted from her heart?
A man of sorrows, if she knew she nursed,
Acquainted with sore grief, how sorrowful
She was! If of the sword which was to pierce
Her heart, what dreadful anguish tortured her!
But if she looked beyond the heavy cross
Of Calvary to all the joy and peace
That, through long ages, to the world would
 come
Through life and death of her dear Son, her love
And joy were wonderful, as in her heart
She kept and pondered all those wondrous things.

This glorious October day, the sun
Is shining, warm and bright. The trees in all
The glory of Autumnal hues; the sky
Is clear and blue, with here and there a cloud
So beautiful, ethereal, and yet
So real, withal, it seems as if upon
It we might float, to all the things of earth
Indifferent, if we could climb so high.
The glorious river calmly flows, but grand,
While doing its appointed work the same
As when the ponderous blows by Nature dealt
Hewed out its path through mountains, walls of
 rock,
Unto the distant sea. The little brook,
Its source in mountain side far to the north,
Comes tumbling over rocks, in noisy way,
Not knowing that it helps to carry ships

166 HERE AND THERE A LEAF

Across the ocean; yet in solitude,
In quiet calmness, rippling on it flows,
In beauty, as God wills, from year to year.

Beholding all this beauty, breathing in
Fresh inspiration, renewed joy and strength,
May not a quiet little mother take
Fresh courage? Like the brook on gladly go
While singing her sweet songs, unconsciously
Fulfilling all that God would have her do?
May not this mother, like the falling leaves,
Most cheerful be, with brightest face when days
All cheerless threaten, and when winter storms
Are not far off?

How cheerfully the leaves
Go to their death! Dressed in their gorgeous
hues
They seem to try to gladden us before
They fall to mingle with the silent dust.
It is a glad farewell! They have performed
Their mission, and they are content to die.
Just what our Lord intended leaves to do,
They well have done.

A perfect day, indeed!
What glory in the sunshine, grass, and trees!
The hills and valleys sing and shout for joy!
I too may sing his praise who made this day
So beautiful and bright. I praise thy name
Creator of the earth, and sea and sky;
In adoration bow before my Lord!

This little boy who sits upon my knee
I love most tenderly. His dimpled hands
And feet, his lovely eyes that shine like stars,
The sweetest mouth that ever lisped sweet words
Are far more dear to me than tongue can tell!
Dear Jesus, bear him gently in thine arms
Till he shall grow to serve both God and man;
For service is our destined lot on earth;
And if we serve in love, and not in fear,
Our deepest, purest joy is still to serve.

Oh, Baby Ralph! Those hands will pluck sweet
 flowers
To find, one day, the hidden thorns that pierce;
Those little feet will run to find the gold
Just where the rainbow kisses the green field;
The dancing will-o'-wisp will charm your eyes;
But over you, around you evermore,
Your mother's love will like an angel move,
And God's love will surround and cover you,
As with a fiery cloud.

His playthings are all put away; there are
No scraps of paper littering now the floor;
His darling mice, he called these little scraps.
The nursery is neat and orderly,
And will remain so, all the livelong day.
There is a loneliness about the house,
As if our dearest one had gone away.
There is no longer noise of busy feet,
No joyous, boyish play. The sunlight has

168 HERE AND THERE A LEAF

Gone out; throughout our home a shadow of
A cloud, instead, and silence, that of dread
And fear.

He lies there with his lips apart,
And over his warm breast, his little hands
Are meekly folded. He is very ill!
It seems so strange to see our pet so weak
And helpless lie, and we as helpless, quite,
As he, before the power of dread disease.
May God have mercy on us in our day
Of utmost need!

No "Merry Christmas" greets
Our ears to-day; no little stockings filled
From top to toe; no joyous prattle o'er
The gifts of Santa Claus. His Christmas tree
And lovely gifts are put away from sight.
He there unconscious lies. He does not know
The Christ-child waiting stands to lead him home!
Oh, God, be merciful unto our child!

Our baby! Our sweet child, to lie like this!
The room is silent as the grave! It is
A grave, for all our sweetest hopes end here!
He lies so quiet, now, and in his hand
Some one has placed a rose. His eyes are closed
Forevermore! His lovely hands are clasped
To nevermore unfold! His feet, "so tired,"
"My feet are tired, mamma," he would say
When first we noticed he was feeling ill,

Are now at rest! How still he is! And yet
How beautiful! How can we put away
This lovely form? O God, be merciful!

Our darling is not dead, nor e'en asleep!
But up the golden stairs he softly climbs
To enter heaven with shouts of childish glee,
While all the angels welcome him with joy!
And on his breast the Shepherd mild will hold
Our lovely child!

Bowed down, grief-stricken, sad
Are we as only those can be who feel
No more the little arms clasped tightly, with
"I want to hug 'ou, mamma dear," "I want
To kiss 'ou, papa!" "Can 'ittle Ralphie
Help 'ou, papa? Or help 'ou, mamma dear?"
And all the many baby words and ways
So sweet, so tenderly remembered now.
He flowers dearly loved. The first thing which
Within the room he noticed as a babe,
A pansy picture, hanging on the wall.
For many days, with his first baby words
Which none could understand except, perhaps,
The angels watching him, he told his love
To those sweet pansies, bright and beautiful.
The last thing that he noticed, ere all sense
Of what was passing in the room was gone,
Was a bouquet of flowers some one brought;
And after smelling them, and holding them
Until the flowers began to droop upon

170 HERE AND THERE A LEAF

Their stems, and he was tired, too, he said,
 "Oh, mamma, see! My dear sweet flowers are all
 Broke down! Some water, give them, please, to
 keep
 Them nice and fwesh!"

Broke down is our sweet flower
 In all its beauty rare, and put away
 From sight; but when the promised comfort comes
 To us who mourn, then shall we know our flower
 To be transplanted to a balmier clime,
 Where angels tend the flowers, and where the Lord
 Is the good gardener, through the eternal years!
 We know that he with Jesus is, and safe!
 That now no sin can e'er defile our child.
 Through all the lonely years I'll hear him call,
 "I'm watching for you, mamma dear, come up
 To heaven wiv me!" A radiant little one,
 He shines in holier beauty now, baptized
 With immortality!

Oh, mothers, could
 You know what 'tis to lose a lovely child,
 To have him go and leave you desolate,
 However loudly you may call, to hear
 No answer but the beating of your heart
 So bitterly bereaved, I'm very sure
 You would be careful of your words, and strive
 To exercise the patience God will give
 To every mother toward the sweetest gift
 He ever gives! Be good, be good! That when

Your children speak of you in after years,
They'll say, "I never heard my mother speak
An angry, or impatient word!" That when
One goes where only loving words are heard,
You will not feel like falling on your knees
To ask forgiveness of your angel child!
Be good, be good! And follow Christ, your Lord!
Then when you too are called to pass that way,
You'll find your child, and know him still to be
Your own forevermore!

XXIII

HOME, SWEET HOME

Nearly all written romances and scenes enacted upon the stage end with the declaration of love, and the ecstasy of that supreme moment when the lover knows that he is beloved. It is, as it were, the happy consummation of all things, the summit of bliss. It is as if all that is interesting in life, all beauty, all romance, ended with betrothal, when in reality, this is but the beginning of a life-long, tender, worshipful affection, of a romance more thrilling, more pathetic, more tragic, and at the same time more joy-giving than any drama or story of love which was ever written. The strong, pure love of a good man for the one woman of his choice, is a thing so noble, so high, so deep, words cannot express the wonder of it. The pure, sweet, unselfish devotion of a true, womanly woman, is a prize the value of which can never be estimated.

God joins men and women together in the bonds of undying love, love which cannot be measured, love which is kind and suffereth long, love which is strong and endureth all things, love which is born of Him whose name is Love. Joined to her husband in this manner, the wife is content to be

where he is, and no trial is so great as separation from him. The very ground where he treads is precious to her. Everything that he touches is transfigured. In this true love union, she is all in all to her husband. She is the queen of his home to whom he bows down in worshipful deference.

True love is the strongest earthly thing. It takes possession of the whole being. It pervades the innermost recesses of the heart like incense. It purifies, ennobles, and transfigures the life. If no cloud of mistrust or jealousy be permitted to overshadow it, then, indeed, is the home a heaven on earth.

But love is not all that is necessary to secure happiness in the home. Love is sometimes exacting, and jealous without cause. There are disagreements, thoughtless words, too much teasing, too much self-assertion and self-will, and other human failings not even dreamed of in the days of betrothal. Cares are heavy, and nerves are overtaxed. Hasty words are spoken thoughtlessly, and wounds inflicted unintentionally. The friction of life is severe, and self-control gives way under its influence. There is too much liberty of unkind speech, something which sounds much like fault-finding, and the day is spoiled. By a little care and forethought, husband and wife need never spoil the day, but they may always part with a cheery word and a pleasant good-by, when the husband goes to his business in the morning, and

174 HERE AND THERE A LEAF

they may both feel the uplifting influence of such words all the day long, and have no bitter regrets should they find the night too late to undo the work of the morn.

“If I had known in the morning
How wearily all the day
 The words unkind
 Would trouble my mind,
I said when you went away,
I had been more careful, darling,
 Nor given you needless pain;
But we vex our own
With look and tone
 We might never take back again.

“For though in the quiet evening
You may give me the kiss of peace,
 Yet it might be
 That never for me
The pain of the heart should cease.
How many go forth in the morning
 That never come home at night,
And hearts have broken
For harsh words spoken
 That sorrow can never set right.

“We have careful thoughts for the stranger,
And smiles for the sometime guest,
 But oft for our own
 The bitter tone,
Though we love our own the best.

Ah! lips with the curve impatient,
Ah! brow with that look of scorn,
 'Twere a cruel fate,
 Were the night too late
To undo the work of the morn!"

Next to the desire to serve God perfectly, a man's purest ambition is to have a home, a loving wife, and dutiful children. Without a home a man is adrift in the world, and he never knows whither the rough and variable winds of fortune will carry him. A home is to him a haven of rest, a city of refuge, a sanctuary, a place where love reigns. Safe from all intruders, from all greed of gain, from all forms of selfishness and the unjust judgments of men, he is understood, appreciated, beloved. He is at home.

To a woman it is a joy and highest honor to be queen-wife and queen-mother in her own domain. "Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her." There is nothing in life that brings more joy than a happy home. But while we surround it with beauty and poetry, and loving tenderness, we must not forget that we have something to do to create such a home. There is no relation more tenderly watched over by our Heavenly Father than the home relation, but he does not interfere with our arrangements by any supernatural power. It is for the husband and wife to determine whether or not their home shall be to

them and to their children all that a home can be.

In the first place, the-marriage relation should not be entered into for any reason but that of enduring love. No one should be so ignorant of what marriage means as to hazard his life-long happiness by a loveless marriage; the relation is too close, too sacred to admit of any reason for entering into it exclusive of this one; the discipline too unlike anything he has experienced for him to pass through it unscathed, unless love is the scepter wielded in the home. Even then there are likely to be many misunderstandings and many hours of unhappiness before the two, unlike in temperament, with opinions which clash perhaps, and habits formed which they do not like to renounce, can live together in harmony.

Many persons expect the first years of marriage to be the happiest; and if they are disappointed, as they are almost sure to be, they think that they have made a life-long mistake. They do not know that at first they are one only in sight of the law, and that it may require time to make them one in reality, unless they begin their united life in a different manner from that which is usual. Strange as it may seem, in many instances, husband and wife are not together three days before unkind or unwise words have been spoken about something of little consequence. "I am right and you are wrong," "My way is better, and you must conform to it," is the way in which they begin, almost unconsciously, a life

which they thought would be bliss itself. There are many differences of taste and opinion of which they did not think before marriage, and they are surprised to find that they are so unlike each other. By reason of these differences they begin to go asunder, instead of becoming more closely united.

They expect everything to adjust itself beautifully, without especial effort on their part. They think they love each other too well to have even a shadow come between them. They do not realize how easy it is to be selfish, or how imperceptibly the shadows fall. Neither have they any idea, until they have lived together a year or two, how many things must be yielded on the part of both, or compromised between them; nor how important it is that each one should be allowed individuality in character and life. It is by no means necessary that husband and wife should be alike; on the contrary, they should be unlike, that what is wanting in one may be possessed by the other, that the two may make a perfect whole. If they but knew these things, they would study from the hour of marriage to be thoughtful and unselfish, and so avoid many mistakes and regrets.

It is better to begin by making love a practical thing, than to regard it as a mere sentiment. Practical love bears and forbears, and covers a multitude of faults. It is patient and reasonable, and is never oftener called upon to exercise its

graces than in the first years of married life. Why not accept the fact, and act in accordance with it? This is the only way to realize the happiness anticipated. Even then the first years are only the beginning of a growing fitness for each other, followed by a more enduring love, and an ever increasing joy, so that the last years are the best.

Nothing is so much needed in the home as a careful deference to each other's wishes; but this must be mutual. Too much generosity on one hand encourages selfishness on the other; too much yielding by one, a sort of tyranny from the other; so that the only safe way is for each to try to outdo the other in little acts of kindness. It is not enough to love each other secretly; show your love! Be lovers always! Many and many a woman, many a man is starving at heart for expressions of affection, for the acknowledged appreciation of their worth, of their efforts to rise in the world, of their daily self-sacrifice.

If love and the expression of it be necessary when all goes well in the home, how much more so when trouble comes, when the children are ill, when worries overwhelm, when misfortune is at hand, when death breaks into the family circle. Then ought the love-light in the eyes to shine brighter and clearer, and in the strength of noble manhood and noble womanhood and strong faith in God, hand in hand, and heart in heart, they will bravely meet whatever trial is theirs to bear.

There are men who love their wives devotedly, but who never by word or sign express their affection. Some women are equally reticent and it is hard to believe that they really do love and appreciate their husbands. Love and appreciation should be openly expressed. They are for common use, and should not be withheld from common life. If marriage vows were kept, if there were good common sense and fair dealing in the home, as well as love, how happy every one would be! But alas! Many husbands and wives are not in love with each other; they are not one in heart and life, for there are separate interests; the husband is going one way, the wife another. There are estrangements, separations, divorces, destruction of pure, sweet, family life, disorder in the best place on earth in which to sow the seeds of honesty, love and patriotism. "To have and to hold, to love and to cherish till death do us part," words full of heavenly meaning, have lost their solemnity, their sanctity, their imperative obligation. Ought not these words to be changed to something like this: "To have and to hold until the courts do us part?"

Oh, what happiness can there be in marriage without confidence, without absolute surety that the husband and wife are all in all to each other, and nothing whatever to any other man or woman? Without confidence that all expressions of affection which belong especially to the home, find place nowhere else? Oh, men, Oh, women! What of your

home? What of your fidelity? Are you living the truth, or living a lie?

A man may love his wife devotedly, and yet torture her to death by a slow process. Thomas Carlyle adored his Jane, but how he treated her! Bringing her no mete of sympathy or praise, and crowning her with laurel only when her hands were folded meekly over her breast, and the birds were singing over her grave. If he had said to her what he said about her, when she could no longer hear his voice, what a marvelously different life hers would have been!

The author of "A Window in Thrums" says:

"I myself have known a woman so good, matched to a man so selfish, that I cannot think of her even now, quietly. Hers was the tragedy of living on, more mournful than the tragedy that kills; but it did kill her, at last; and her husband, when he no longer had a wife to ill-treat, went about whining that she was an angel!"

The continued nagging which some men, and oh, the pity of it! some women too, practice in their homes, is terrible! The fruit of much sowing is bitter indeed, and is likely to grow into an estrangement which no afterthought, or carefulness or regret can ever overcome. Love wounded is slow to heal. Love with which fault is continually found, will slowly bleed to death. "Oh, Love, how red thy heart is and thy hands are full of

roses!" But the roses will drop from palsied hands, and, soon or late, the heart will fail, a sacrifice upon Love's altar!

Not many years ago at the marriage ceremony, a wife was obliged to promise to obey her husband. A certain woman declared that she would never make that promise. The minister who was to marry her was told her intention, and was determined to require her to make the usual promises. In repeating the words of the service after him, when she reached the word "obey," she was seized with violent coughing. The minister patiently waited, saying, "We will try again." So he began at the beginning. The second time, the coughing was more violent than before. "Never mind," he said, "do not feel embarrassed, we will wait a few minutes, and try again." Then some one brought her a glass of water, and they tried again, with the same result. Then the minister declared it to be useless to try the fourth time, and that he would postpone the marriage. "Oh, no, no!" she cried. "Try again!" And this time she fairly screamed the word "obey."

In these days we marry with, or without promising obedience. It makes no difference. No woman now-a-days is expected to be subservient to her husband, and that is right. An old Quaker lady gave a well known preacher the following advice: "Robert, when thee performs the marriage ceremony, thee should not make the wife promise to obey the husband, unless thee also

make the husband promise to obey the wife; for they should be equal."

"Not like to like, but like in difference;
Yet in long years liker must they grow;
The man be more of woman, she of man,
Till at the last she set herself to man,
Like perfect music unto noble words.

Either sex alone,
Is half itself; and in true marriage lies
Nor equal nor unequal; each fulfills
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,
Purpose in purpose, will in will they grow,
The two-celled heart beating with one full stroke,
Life!"

Spurgeon settled the vexed question of conjugal obedience in an address at the marriage of the daughter of a friend, when he spoke to the bride about her future lord: "Let him be the head, and do you be the neck to turn him which way you please."

While you are not expected to obey your husband, let your first thought be for his happiness; not in a servile way, because he demands it, but because he is more to you than all the world besides. Let interests outside your home be secondary; home first, always. That is your province. It rests largely with you to make it a happy home. On the part of the husband also, there is much required that every thing may go on happily. If your wife does not, at first, meet

your expectations in every particular, do not begin at once to try to make her over according to your own model. Be patient with her. You have not married a woman of experience. However excellent her training may have been, she is in a position altogether new and strange, and which demands much of which she has hitherto known nothing.

Share with each other your burdens and perplexities. It will make them easier to bear, and strengthen and purify your love. Do not allow selfishness in any form to enter your home. Teach the children early to seek the happiness of others before their own. With all the members of the household obeying the law of love, how happy will be the home, and how pure and strong its ties. Let the family altar be erected early, that the blessing of God may rest upon the daily life. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

All this may seem prosy and commonplace, especially to the young; but why not look at things as they are? Much of the unhappiness in homes comes from false estimates. That any discordant note should enter into the harmony of two souls whose bliss is heaven itself, cannot be thought of for a moment. But life is not all sentiment; we have the material with which to deal; and while we need all the poetry, all the romance, all the philosophy we can command, we need far more

the grace of God in the heart to fortify us against the surprises and disappointments that are sure to come at first, to be followed by a better understanding of each other, and a purer love which will bear and forbear with sweetness and patience "till death do us part."

Some women think that they are not accomplishing anything worthy of commendation unless they are able to do something for the world outside their homes. What better can they do for the world than to train a family for usefulness? It is enough for one woman to make a happy home, and to lead her children in ways of righteousness and truth; and to no one will there be a heartier welcome at heavens gates than to the faithful wife and mother.

A bankrupt merchant went home one night and said to his wife, "We are ruined! Everything we had in the world is in the hands of the sheriff!" After a few moments of silence his noble wife asked, "Will he sell you? Will he sell me?" "Oh, no!" "Then don't say we have lost everything. All that is most profitable to us, manhood and womanhood, remains. We have lost but the skill and industry of our hands. We may make another fortune, if our hearts and hands are left to us." How much better thus to have been a helpmate and true comrade to her husband than to have weakly bewailed their misfortune, or to have found fault with his management of his business. Many women would have whined and

fretted and found fault, making it all the harder for the husband, and for herself as well. Fault-finding is a cruel thing under all circumstances. It is a slow poison which ruins the life of many a woman, many a man. It is so easy to wound. The tongue is an unruly member; once let loose it goes on and on, and before you know it, you have said something you might better not have said, you have wounded your best friend, you have dropped a match into the inflammable materials upon which your happiness is built. It is the little foxes, which are hardly worth noticing, that eat up the vines. Abraham Lincoln said: "I always pull up a thistle and plant a flower wherever a flower will grow." That is what is needed in the home; thistles pulled up, and flowers planted.

Many men and women have much for which to answer for the way in which they desecrate their homes, and bring disfavor and reproach upon the most sacred of all relations. Is sweet home life no longer common? Has falling in love with another woman's husband, or another man's wife become so frequent that it has lost half its shame? Is there no longer the laying down of selfishness, the sacrificial offering upon Love's altar? Or have we instead, sacrilege, profanation, the breaking of holy vows, the sundering of what ought to be strong marital ties? Thank God! There are many true husbands, and true wives, and happy homes, and these must be the leaven which will leaven the whole lump, these must be a light set

upon a hill which cannot be hid, a beacon light warning all against the dangerous shoals, the hidden rocks which threaten destruction.

An estrangement between husband and wife usually begins with a trifling thing, which might easily be settled in the beginning by the use of a little common sense and forbearance. Be frank with each other. Speak out! Do not brood over things which are likely to be imaginary. Let there be no reservations. The most important thing is to take God into your counsels. Harmony cannot reign where God is not; where he is not present, evil will press in. The nearer you get to God in your home, the nearer you will get to each other. If there ever be a time when you need to call mightily on God for help, it is when you are tempted to be unfaithful in word or look, thought or deed, to your marriage vows. Love's hands are full of roses, but beware of the thorns which pierce and poison the heart's life.

Young men and young women, do not be in haste to marry. Better, a thousand times, never to marry at all, than to have reason for regretting entering into the bonds of matrimony. Do not think it a small thing to enter into this sacred relation. It is a most serious one; its obligations are heavy, and far-reaching; its consequences, a lifetime of happiness or misery. Young people often speak of marriage as if it were the most ordinary thing in the world. "We will try it," they say, "and if we are not happy together, we

will get a divorce." Be not so unwise. Weigh well the matter, and marry for life, and live in love, every day, common sense love.

"Life is too short, the pain of life too keen
To hold our love too fine for common use.
The sunlight falls alike on lofty oak
And on the modest grass-blade at its foot;

"And so our love is meant for daily use,
To lighten common cares and brighten life,
And not to be reserved for eulogy,
Or epitaph upon a monument.

"Give while you may, and not withhold your love
From dearest and most faithful friend on earth
Till you are forced to say with bleeding heart,
'Too late, too late! I bring my gift too late!'"

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